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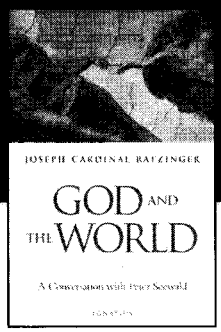

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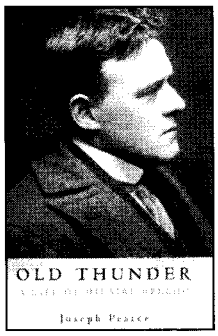

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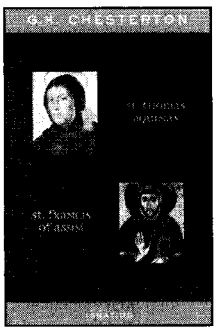

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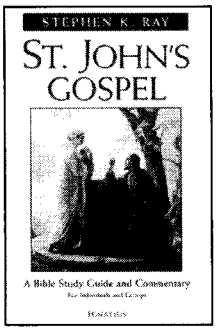

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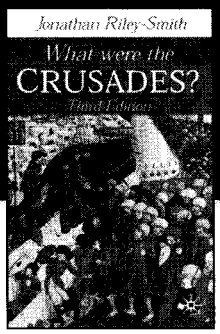

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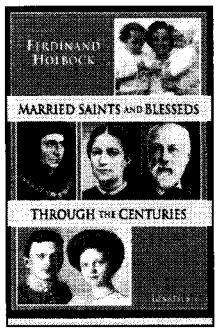

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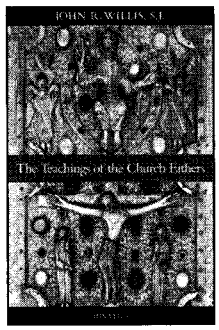

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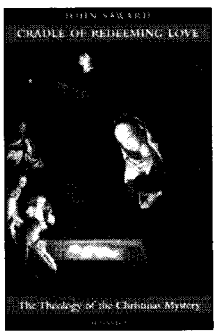

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The New Fatherhood?

I'm sure we are all pleased that the Linkers have been blessed with a son, as Damon Linker reports in "Fatherhood, 2002" (November 2002). Moreover, it is good to know that mother and child (and, we must now add, father) have passed successfully—indeed, triumphantly—through the perils of gestation, labor, delivery, and middle-of-the-night lactation and defecation.

Nevertheless, it is always a tricky matter—not impossible, but tricky—for the relatively inexperienced to offer their hard-earned wisdom to the relatively experienced. And those of us sufficiently worn down by the years, who now get up a few times overnight just to go to the bathroom ourselves rather than to see to the needs of a newborn, may perhaps be forgiven for having our suspicions aroused by the fact that Mr. Linker supposes that he and his wife have now gotten past "the most physically and emotionally taxing era of parenting." God bless you, Damon. May it be so for the two of you. But I'd like a report twenty years or so from now, when you may well look back on this time as a golden age. (I also note, just in passing, that although Mr. Linker has the "parenting" lingo down, a reference to "my wife" is still a bit hegemonic, drawing, as it does, the identity of Ms. Linker, if she has taken that surname in preference to her father's, rather too firmly into the orbit of Mr. Linker.)

My suspicions aroused by the notion that the toughest part might already be past, I began to note other troubling aspects of Mr. Linker's account of his experience of fatherhood (if I may be just a bit archaic in my terminology). For example, I found myself unable to decide whether his heroic middle-of-the-night labors were motivated chiefly by a laudable effort to help Ms. Linker with burdensome and tiring responsibilities, or whether they were motivated chiefly by a desire for experiences he found personally fulfilling. (It is striking, for example, that he should describe the unconditional love one gives to one's child as a gift the giver experiences. I had thought the point was that the child should experience it.) I even detected a slight whiff of regret at his own inability to lactate, a sad biological fact that should concern those gnostic enough to think simply in terms of "parenting." I'm sure he helped, and helped nobly, on many occasions, but I found myself wondering whether it was just possible that his desire for fulfilling experience might occasionally have deprived Ms. Linker of moments feeding her son that could have been calm, still, even highly sensuous—had it not been for her husband stumbling around in search of fulfillment. But I may be wrong, and that is surely for the spouses themselves to decide.

Some other matters are less reserved for private judgment. I am, for instance, surprised that Mr. Linker, philosophically sophisticated as he is, should suppose that fashioning a "thoroughly modern, egalitarian marriage" must ideally mean splitting all tasks (lactation, alas, aside) down the middle with no division of labor. That an egalitarian marriage can be structured in such a manner is, of course, obvious. But it's less clear to me why Mr. Linker supposes that (to borrow an analogy from C. S. Lewis) stones laid in a row should be more appealing than an arch. Moreover, I am quite confident that, if the day comes when Baby Linker is blessed with brothers and sisters (known to him, perhaps, as siblings), Mr. Linker and Ms. Linker will often come to see

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that equal treatment of these children does not at all mean identical treatment.

Or again, there is nothing wrong with spouses deciding to put less emphasis on their work outside the home in order to share in the pleasures of domesticity (and it is that, not sacrifice, that Mr. Linker actually has in mind). But I would find this more persuasive were Mr. Linker less captive to the notion that being at home with one's child constitutes a horrible deprivation. With apologies to many fine colleagues past and present, I often found the company of my young children more interesting than the company of my colleagues. (I have, though, tried as best I can to be guided by a truth that seems to me immutable: one's children are never as interesting to others as they are to oneself. I commend this truth to Mr. Linker, lest the many predictable achievements of Baby Linker incite in him the impulse to provide regular reports.)

Finally, there is for my taste just a bit too much slaying of the father going on in Mr. Linker's essay. He does a disservice, I suspect, to his own father and to many other fathers in his suggestion that only an experience of fatherhood like his own (rather brief) experience can enact or express unconditional love. Working hard to earn a living and thereby to provide for one's children is surely at least one way to enact such love. With all good will and with the hope that fatherhood may continue to be as satisfying for him as it has thus far been, I commend this possibility to Mr. Linker.

Gilbert Meilaender
Valparaiso University
Valparaiso, Indiana

Damon Linker is definitely on to something. As my forthcoming book, *Soft Patriarchs, New Men: Religion, Ideology, and Male Familial Involvement* (University of Chicago Press), will show in greater detail, the rising generation of fathers—especially Christian fathers like Mr. Linker—are significantly more involved in the lives of their children than were their fathers and grandfathers. But Mr. Linker goes beyond his own experience as a father to speculate that contemporary fatherhood is on course towards a thoroughgoing model of gender equality. He seems unaware of the fact that the division of labor in contemporary American families remains strongly gendered in practice, even though most couples subscribe to an egalitarian ideology in theory.

Although married fathers spend more time with their children than did previous generations, mothers still do the lion's share of child care (and household labor). In 1998, for instance, the average father of children at home in the United States devoted just slightly more than half the time to child care (fifty-seven minutes a day) that the average mother did (104 minutes a day). One of the reasons that fathers of children at home devote less time to their children than do mothers is that the vast majority of these fathers work full-time outside the home, while a majority of mothers do not. Consequently, married fathers with children at home generally earn about 70 percent of their families' income—that is, more than twice as much as do married mothers. Thus, at least in the U.S., it does not seem likely that we will be adopting the egalitarian model of family life advocated by Mr. Linker anytime soon.

Even in European countries like Sweden that provide generous, paid parental leave to both mothers and fathers and strong cultural support for egalitarian norms, fathers are much less likely than mothers to take time away from the labor force to be with their children. Moreover, these countries also see women in the workforce tending towards professions like daycare, education, and social services that enable them to maintain some type of contact with children, and men tending towards professions like business that have little to do with children. So even high levels of female labor force participation can mask significant gender differences in the ongoing level of connection that men and women have to the caring functions traditionally ascribed to mothers.

Since the 1960s, the United States has witnessed dramatic gains in paternal involvement among fathers who reside with their children (sadly, a shrinking share of the population of fathers). But Mr. Linker should not confuse his brief experience as a "new man," and perhaps the experience of his well-educated peers, with trends in the nation as a whole. The day when the average American father is up with baby on a 50-50 basis is by no means in sight.

W. Bradford Wilcox
Department of Sociology
University of Virginia
Charlottesville, Virginia

While I appreciate almost any effort to glorify fatherhood, I believe Damon Linker's "Fatherhood, 2002" suffers from several core errors. These errors lead him astray as he attempts to discern the role of fathers in contemporary society.

First, Mr. Linker perceives a generational gap between him and his elders concerning the role of a father. His argument seems to be that attending childbirth classes and being present during the birth of his son have given him and his cohort an entirely new and different perspective on fatherhood. As Mr. Linker and I are only a year or two apart in age, I suggest that this difference is not generational, but instead experiential. Might not the critical difference between Mr. Linker and his fifty-something interlocutor be not that the former was permitted into labor and delivery, but instead that the latter has actually raised a child—and probably more than one—to adulthood? I would suggest that it is the eighteen-plus years of experience as a father, and not the absence of a therapeutic childbirth class, that has created the "gap" Mr. Linker experiences.

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Second, Mr. Linker has fallen into the trap that social science graduate students are taught to avoid from their first day of training. He has extrapolated from his data. Mr. Linker has three key experiential points—the pre-birth coursework he attended with his wife, the (vicarious) experience of childbirth, and six months of tending a newborn infant. From these experiences, Mr. Linker creates an "egalitarian" paradigm to cover experiences—the birth of a second child, schooling, sibling rivalries, puberty, watching children leave home—about which he knows nothing. This is not to say that one cannot speak about things one has not experienced, but Mr. Linker hinges his essay on the universality of his personal experience, leaving his argument lacking where that experience ends.

From his data, Mr. Linker derives an authoritative endorsement of egalitarian "parenting." Yet, as Harvey Mansfield has forcefully reminded us, the verb "to parent" is a recent addition to our language. While the distinction is hard to discern when the object is a six-month-old infant, I would maintain that Mr. Linker will soon find out that his job is not "to parent," but instead "to father"—an entirely different task (albeit with some overlapping responsibilities) than "to mother." Mr. Linker seems to believe that an egalitarian marriage must necessarily be an androgynous one. Does he really wish the androgynization of marriage—and by extension, society—to proceed to the point where "parenting" is all that a child requires, or deserves? Does he realize where the logic of his argument leads? To bring up just one difficulty, perhaps Mr. Linker could explain the behavior of similarly egalitarian "new men" in Western Europe, with their below-replacement fertility and high rates of extramarital cohabitation.

I do not believe Mr. Linker realizes how much his "egalitarian" marriage rests on the relatively easy nature of the work he performs (try staying up with the baby after several successive overtime shifts at the mill) and the fact that he has only one child. If he is blessed with more children, I suspect he will find that certain stubborn facts—specialization, division of labor, comparative advantage—might cause him to question his androgynous model.

Mr. Linker's essay is not without merit, as he does highlight—following Christopher Lasch and Allen Carlson, inter alia—the tensions that traditional families have faced in post-agrarian society. And his concern that the dignity of women not be sacrificed to societal transformation is certainly a valid one. But Mr. Linker seems to believe that only women have been affected by these societal changes, and that adapting to our new world requires abandoning traditional sexual roles. Does he really believe that nature is so fragile that a century of industrialization and automation has rendered it obsolete?

There are certainly tensions between contemporary society and the family. But I would maintain that people of faith should not surrender to these tensions, but instead resist them. And let me assure Mr. Linker that men, as well as women, feel the strain. No one, male or female, can "have it all." But men will simply never feel these tensions to the same extent as do women. Neither Mr. Linker nor I will ever—no matter how supportive we attempt to be—be able to ovulate or lactate. Biology has consequences. I would suggest that Mr. Linker accept this fact, get a good night's sleep, and perhaps wake up with his son early in the morning to permit his wife a few hours uninterrupted rest.

Douglas A. Ollivant
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

My husband and I have something in common with Damon Linker, author of "Fatherhood, 2002." We too have a new baby boy, born August 2, 2002. Our son joins seven older sisters and brothers. How commendable for Mr. Linker to get up in the wee hours to keep his wife company while she nurses the baby; however, my dear husband is skeptical that a significantly older Mr. Linker will still be doing so with their eighth newborn.

Mr. Linker's "thoroughly modern, egalitarian marriage in which equality of obligations is the default position" seems appealing on the surface. He anticipates that he and his wife will both work outside the home, and dodge the babysitter tension by sharing equally the responsibilities of child-rearing. Realistically, I think this will be difficult and stressful to achieve. To avoid daycare, parents will need complementary part-time jobs, full-time swing shifts, or home-based employment. I am sure Mr. Linker, supportive as he sounds, would not demand that his wife be out bringing home an equal amount of bacon because he did half the housework. But there is a regrettable modern phenomenon of husbands who prefer a maximum wifely paycheck and full-time daycare for the youngsters over supporting a wife as a stay-at-home mother to the children.

I can testify from experience that the Linkers may find traditionally female-dominated fields more compatible with their need for flexibility in employment. Nurtured on the 1960s barrage of feminist ideals and self-fulfillment indoctrination, I chose to study the nontraditional (for women) field of engineering. Not until my childbearing years did I realize that part-time and/or flexible jobs in this field are not the norm. I am encouraging my own daughters to carefully consider the demands of mothering when choosing a career path, and they are leaning toward more flexible careers in the medical field and education.

While Mr. Linker poignantly recognizes that "there's no substitute for the act of devoting oneself to another person," he still seems to think that a career is the answer to the possibility that a stay-at-home mother might be lonely at home, and he does not want women to "suppress their desire for

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the goods that come from pursuing" a career. However, there is a cost involved for the family and the church when women choose en masse the lure of money and recognition rather than the self-sacrificial route of the homemaker. Relief of loneliness and acquisition of worldly goods cannot compete with the supreme calling of the stay-at-home mom to lay down her life for others, and the intangible rewards of pursuing that call. She can minister to the needs of husband and children and, unlike her working counterpart, may still have some time and energy to volunteer, "to show hospitality, wash the feet of the saints, relieve the afflicted, and devote herself to doing good in every way" as did the commended woman of 1 Timothy 5:10.

Vivian Rohe
Houghton, New York

Damon Linker is a good modern husband. He is attentive, sensitive, and conscientious about doing his 50 percent to make a successful egalitarian marriage. He is also a new father, and in good Fatherhood 2002 style, Daddy Linker does more than the customary share of feeding, changing, holding, and rocking. It gives him a great deal of satisfaction to contribute his fair share.

But he and his wife have been doing full-time Parenthood 2002 for a while now, and it's time for mom to decide whether to stay home with the baby or go to work. Mr. Linker is, of course, supportive of his wife as she faces this "tragic choice." Being an intelligent man, one whose occupation requires thinking rationally, he is well-suited to do the pragmatic and moral calculations necessary to playing his role in the team decision-making process.

After adding up the pros and cons, this is what he comes up with. Feminist ideology is here to stay—a point for mom working. Lack of handy extended family members—point for working. Male-egalitarian-partner types can't ask women to "suppress their desire for the goods that come from pursuing an occupation outside the home"—another point for working. Women need the "public recognition of the workplace"—working. The length of the maternity and paternity leaves granted under Family and Medical Leave Act are too short—working scores again.

To be fair, Mr. Linker tries to help the stay-at-home side by considering the point of view of "premodern" conservatives. He sympathizes with traditionalists like his parents, but he can't, in the end, give credit to the arguments of an old-fashioned generation that made expectant dads wait in the Stork Room during delivery.

So, after weighing the arguments advanced by feminism, materialism, and progressivism, Mr. Linker concludes that some kind of daycare arrangement is obviously justifiable. QED.

I suppose modern readers would think it petty if someone pointed out that all the arguments on the working side of his equation are either non sequitors, not true, or what we used to call vices. And far be it from me to be insensitive to a nice young husband's stress faced with the heavy moral calculus required to Have It All. But someone needs to tell Mr. Linker that there's a crucial constant missing from his equation—the B-A-B-Y. It seems that Childhood 2002 means being the forgotten factor in the moral equation.

Judy O'Neill
Wheaton, Illinois

Thank you for publishing Damon Linker's moving and intelligent dispatch from the front lines of first-time fatherhood. It is all too easy for a conservative to confuse "how things were done fifty years ago" with "how nature means for things to be done," and Mr. Linker exhorts us to shake off any such confusion. It may suit the modern economy for families to send fathers out to earn bread and keep women home to bake it; it is less clear that such an arrangement is suitable to the needs of parents' and children's souls. Do we imagine St. Joseph would have been satisfied to be with Jesus only a little each evening and on the weekends?

Anthropologists have argued for nearly a century that men and women have no intrinsic differences, only conventional ones. While this claim seems evidently false to anyone with the slightest experience of life—let alone the experience of raising boys and girls—it does not therefore follow that men's and women's spheres must be as separate and distinct as possible. Children benefit from spending substantial amounts of time with their fathers: How can we ask our children to love God the Father if that appellation suggests to them a deity with little spare time for children and not much knack for ordinary daily caring and loving? Fathers benefit likewise from the experience of tenderness given and received, over and over, with patience and exasperation and boredom and hope. Mothers, too, benefit when fathers spend more time fathering: suddenly spaces open up in their lives for prayer, for volunteer work, for wage-earning, for reading novels and maintaining friendships and all the things that get pushed aside by the needs of young children. How many women might consider that third child (or fourth? or fifth?) if they thought it would not mean the end of the necessary quiet spaces in their lives?

Jennifer DeRose
Baltimore, Maryland

I disagree with Damon Linker about the importance of stay-at-home moms to the raising of children. Yes, our society has changed, but the fundamental needs of our children have not. Despite feminism's claims, many intelligent, well-educated women have put public recognition and the pursuit of a career aside to commit full time to the important task of raising their children—sometimes, as in my case, at great financial sacrifice. I

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have done this because I think there is nothing more rewarding than raising physically, mentally, and spiritually healthy children, and because I believe it is one of the most important things I will ever do.

I am not concerned with feminist ideology or with the "egalitarian tendencies of modernity," neither of which seems to have resulted in the raising of better children. What I am concerned with is being there when ten-month-old Elizabeth takes her first step, watching five-year-old David get off the school bus, and listening to two-year-old Mary happily chatter away. My children will always know that their mom considered being with them more important than pursing a career as an attorney.

Yes, at times my life seems unappealing. While other women my age in my profession are consulting with clients and bringing in sizable incomes, I am changing diapers and pinching pennies in order to pay off my school loan. Yes, at times I feel isolated, but the rewards are much greater than any sacrifice that I make. My children are special, irreplaceable gifts from God, and I am richly blessed and honored that He has afforded me the privilege of raising these precious human beings. I trust Mr. Linker and his wife will think long and hard about their son's needs before deciding who will be there for him.

Diane Grotberg
Fergus Falls, Minnesota

It was a Saturday morning when I read "Fatherhood, 2002," and I had just changed the diaper of my nine-month-old. A few feet away, my four-year-old was watching Saturday morning cartoons. I was minding the little ones so that my wife, now pregnant with our fourth child, could have a chance to sleep in. Mr. Linker's advice that fathers should help out more in the home was certainly apropos; and of course it's hard to argue with that. However, his other advice was not well taken by this father of four, holder of two demanding jobs, and husband of a stay-at-home mom, even in the twenty-first century.

What I take issue with is Mr. Linker's position that traditional (he used the very telling term "premodern") marriage roles—in which the father earns the family keep, and the mother cares for the children and home—are neither possible nor desirable for "most people." One of Mr. Linker's main reasons is that traditional roles "face powerful opposition from feminist ideology." With all due respect, if we start down the slippery slope of worrying about feminist opposition, we will end by rejecting not just traditional roles, but fatherhood itself. Feminist ideology has already demonstrated a preference for same-sex relationships and non-procreative sex. The real question is not whether fathers will face opposition from feminists (they already do), but whether the opposition deserves respect and acceptance.

I am also uncertain what is meant by "a thoroughly modern, egalitarian marriage." Mr. Linker mentions this in contrast with "male friends from an older generation." For my own part, I am older than Mr. Linker, but only by five years; I might therefore be considered of the same generation, and yet I find myself consciously and deliberately "out of step" with my generation. The reason? My prior commitment to the God of Judeo-Christian revelation, who was, generally speaking, accepted by the "older generation" and rejected by mine (though there are signs He is making a comeback). Anyone who really accepts and understands Judeo-Christian tradition will find the teaching clear, even if often glossed over: the husband is—or at least should be—the head of the family. While it is very nice to say one's marriage is "egalitarian," the honest truth is that there can be no absolute equality in a marriage—unless it becomes a divorce. A marriage is like a couple dancing a waltz. Both dancers are equally important; however, one leads, the other follows. Otherwise they eventually go separate ways and there is no more dance (partnership) to speak of. I do not presume to judge the case of Mr. Linker, but in my experience, most couples who tout their "egalitarian marriage" are cases in which the wife is playing the role of head, but neither she nor her husband are likely to admit it. Absolute egalitarianism in marriage is at best a noble, if unattainable, goal, and at worst an invitation to self-deception and hypocrisy.

L. A. Carstens
Castaic, California

Damon Linker replies:

When I submitted "Fatherhood, 2002" to my fellow editors, I warned them that it might be controversial. My endorsement of government-supported paternity leave would, I surmised, generate some annoyance on the part of our more libertarian readers. But my colleagues knew better. Every one of them predicted that my advocacy of "thoroughly modern, egalitarian marriage" and parental roles would be far more contentious. How right they were.

Since Gilbert Meilaender's charming letter raises or gestures toward many of the criticisms launched in the others, I will begin with his. Professor Meilaender thinks he has caught me in a contradiction—or even a series of them. On the one hand, I indicate that I did my best to help my wife immediately after the birth of our son in an effort to relieve her of "burdensome and tiring responsibilities"; on the other, I appear to have been motivated to do so by a "desire for experiences [I] found personally fulfilling." Likewise, he notes that I consider "the unconditional love one gives to one's child" to be a "gift the giver experiences" when, in fact, "the point" of such a gift should be that "the child . . . experience[s] it." Prof. Meilaender implies that these contradictions or tensions reveal an underlying confusion on my part: while I sometimes treat "being at home with one's child [as] . . . a hor-

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rible deprivation" and "sacrifice," at other places I write as if I long to enjoy the "pleasures of domesticity."

To judge from some of the other letters, Prof. Meilaender is not alone in his perplexity. Vivian Rohe, for example, praises the "self-sacrificial route of the homemaker" and condemns me for assuming that one can raise children without a cost. Judy O'Neill, by contrast, apparently believes that I consider the life of a full-time homemaker to be one of unremitting drudgery—and that my wife and I have decided to rely on daycare in order to allow her to avoid it. (For the record, we have no such plans.)

So which is it? Do I think that caring for one's children is a burden or something from which we benefit? As I worked very hard to make clear in my essay, I think it is both. Indeed, I must admit to being somewhat dismayed that so many readers failed to understand that I meant to be making the simple and obvious, but also profound, point that raising children involves sacrifice as well as joy—and even that, paradoxically, the former can lead to the latter, which is something to which Ms. Rohe rightly draws our attention when she writes of "the intangible rewards of pursuing . . . [the] call" to devote one's life to another. I thus consider raising a child to be a very great good, although also a complex one that requires the sacrifice of other goods on the part of both parents.

I suspect that confusion about my position arose, at least in part, from the fact that I meant to emphasize that mothers and fathers have traditionally had to make very different kinds (and degrees) of sacrifices in raising children—and that these differences have changed over time. Men, for instance, have traditionally been called upon to sacrifice relatively little, since their role as provider for the household did not fundamentally change with the arrival of children; whether a couple had no children, one child, or several, the man's responsibility consisted primarily in supporting the family financially by going to work outside the home.

With these traditional husbands and fathers in mind, Prof. Meilaender informs us that "working hard to earn a living and thereby to provide for one's children" is perfectly compatible with "enact[ing] or express[ing] unconditional love." I'm sure it is. Still, I wonder why he so stubbornly resists the possibility that, in contributing more than they traditionally have to the life of the home—that is, in recognizing the domestic goods (and sacrifices) from which their traditional roles have excluded them—fathers might become capable of enacting or expressing that love in a purer, more direct way.

The sacrifices and rewards faced by women—traditionally assigned to the task of caring for the children full-time in the home—have been very different. As I pointed out in my column, the structure of premodern social life provided substantial support to mothers. But today that structure has largely broken down, frequently leaving them isolated and overwhelmed (as Diane Grotberg, for one, admits). Moreover, many women (and not only women) have come to realize that their exclusion from activities outside the home was based largely on false assumptions about their natural capacities and the activities to which they are naturally suited. (I'll return to the issue of nature in a moment.) The result is that women today find themselves divided between the same competing (private and public) goods as men, although for many women the division is much more stark.

These, then, are the tensions that define modern fatherhood and motherhood—and it is the attempt to mitigate them that leads so many families to pursue the egalitarian ideal I sketched in my column. W. Bradford Wilcox (along with L. A. Carstens and Ms. Rohe) is certainly right to note that, in practice, "the division of labor in contemporary American families remains strongly gendered." Yet surely the fact that, as Prof. Wilcox concedes, most couples today "subscribe to an egalitarian ideology in theory" is, historically speaking, a profoundly significant change that will have important long-term consequences for the structure of the family, even if "the day when the average American father is up with baby on a 50-50 basis is by no means in sight."

And here we come to the heart of the matter. Confusions about my position aside, perhaps the most striking thing about the letters is their almost uniform hostility to my praise for an alternative to the hierarchical model of marriage. Many were inspired by this praise to defend the traditional family structure against what they took to be my assault upon it (what Prof. Meilaender calls my "slaying of the father"). These defenses take a number of forms. Some, like Ms. O'Neill and Mr. Carstens, seek to defend tradition as such, baldly asserting that (in Carstens' words) "the husband is—or at least should be—the head of the family." I must admit to finding such declarations unpersuasive. One problem with them is that they presuppose the existence of a coherent, intact "tradition" on these matters that, for many of us, no longer exists. Despite what Ms. O'Neill thinks she can infer from my column, my own family, for example, was far from traditional. My parents divorced when I was eight years old, I've had no contact with my mother since I was nine, and my younger brother and I were raised exclusively by my father from that time forward. Needless to say, for children of such untraditional households, appeals to the tradition of the stay-at-home mom and the full-time working dad can't help but sound like a call to innovation.

And this points to the more fundamental problem with such appeals—namely, that tradition is considered to be prescriptive only when we believe that it embodies, reflects, or ex-

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presses truths that transcend the merely traditional. What I understood myself to be doing in my column was simply describing a situation in which growing numbers of husbands and wives no longer believe that the traditional division of labor in the family adequately embodies, reflects, or expresses the truth about how best to answer the call to love and serve one another and their children.

A recognition of the limits of appealing to mere tradition can be detected in some of the letters. Hence Prof. Meilaender's and Douglas A. Ollivant's (tentative) attempts to bring in notions of human nature. Yet even here, I am struck by how weak the arguments are. Oddly enough, both authors speculate that my desire to participate more fully in raising my son is somehow connected to a deep-seated longing to lactate. The proposal would seem to imply that Messrs. Meilaender and Ollivant believe traditional family roles are linked in some mysterious way to a woman's ability to breastfeed, although, unfortunately, they never explain the connection—just as they fail to confront the fact that breastfeeding was actively discouraged by doctors and social norms in the middle decades of the twentieth century, when the traditional division of labor in the family was rarely questioned. All of which reluctantly leads me to conclude that their suggestion has about as much substance—and perhaps the same intention behind it—as a playground taunt of "faggot."

To the bit about lactation, Mr. Ollivant adds the observation that women alone can ovulate. True enough. Though in this case, too, I fail to see what such a biological fact tells us about the suitability of either parent for raising (as opposed to conceiving and birthing) children. (I'd also like to suggest to Mr. Ollivant that he apply his very sensible warnings about the dangers of extrapolating from available data to his thoroughly unsubstantiated assertions about a link between the prevalence of "new men" in Europe and the continent's "below-replacement fertility and high rates of extramarital cohabitation.")

I'm afraid that if the hierarchical family has any hope of surviving in the long term, it's going to require a better defense than this. I, for one, doubt that such a defense is possible—as does, I presume, Jennifer DeRose, whose praise I note with gratitude. The traditional family's stark division of labor is simply too much at odds with the way too many of us now live and think about what it means for a husband to "love his wife as himself" (Ephesians 5:33). Eventually most Americans—if not the authors of the most critical letters, then almost certainly their kids—will come to accept and affirm the not-so-radical proposition that, for their own sake no less than that of their wives and children, fathers can and should contribute more to the family than a paycheck.

Listening to the Laity

Mary Ann Glendon's trenchant analysis in "The Hour of the Laity" (November 2002) points ineluctably to the emerging dilemma for those concerned to find the appropriate role for lay people in the current crisis of the Church in the United States.

On the one hand, the proper and specific sphere for lay participation in the Church's mission is—as Vatican II, Pope John Paul II, and common sense all indicate—the secular order ("the world"). On the other hand, not just the current crisis but the right ordering of relationships within the Christian community both demand a heightened role for the laity within Church structures and institutions, including a meaningful part in the shaping of decisions. We have hardly begun the hard but crucial task of sorting-out that this situation requires.

As this work goes forward, it will be essential to set aside the clericalist mentality, common to so many laity and clergy alike, that raises obstacles to clear thinking. Flannery O'Connor got it exactly right. When someone asked her, back in 1959, why she, a Catholic writer, wrote so much about Protestant zealots, she replied: "To a lot of Protestants I know, monks and nuns are fanatics, none greater. And to a lot of the monks and nuns I know, my Protestant prophets are fanatics. For my part, I think the only difference between them is that if you are a Catholic and have this intensity of belief you join a convent and are heard from no more; whereas if you are a Protestant and have it, there is no convent for you to join and you go about in the world, getting into all sorts of trouble and drawing the wrath of people who don't believe anything much at all down on your head."

This remains remarkably acute; and it cuts more ways than one. It is not necessary to be an aging '60s-style Catholic dissident, as Professor Glendon unfortunately suggests, to believe that clericalism—which reserves a truly serious living of faith, whether in the Church or in the world, to clerics and religious—must finally go. Only then will a comprehensive response to the crisis on the part of the Catholic laity truly be possible.

Russell Shaw
Washington, D.C.

The Catholic reader, saturated but still shocked at ongoing "Scandal Time," turns eagerly to Professor Mary Ann Glendon's article "The Hour of the Laity" for some help, as she puts it, in seeing things "afresh." A lawyer's clarity, perhaps, or at least the fresh insight of an observant layperson.

But the tip-off to the inadequacy of her interesting comments comes very early: the "sleeping giant" body of laity is beginning to stir—roused by *media coverage* of *clerical* misconduct. Is the coverage to be yet again complained of? What is missing, of course, as the reader continues, is any discussion at all of the role of the bishops. As Richard John Neuhaus, George Weigel, and others have re-

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peatedly pointed out, the present scandal is two-edged—clerical abuse *and* episcopal malfeasance. The outrage among the laity in Boston, for example, now described as the crisis epicenter, is primarily directed at Bernard Cardinal Law's cover-up policy. But Prof. Glendon finds no need to even mention the bishops until the fifth page of a seven-page article and the word "clericalism" never appears at all. One might have expected that the *habladors* of which she speaks would turn out to be the episcopacy, but, no, they are the assimilated theologians, educators, and clergy.

The "people-called-together" have indeed been repeatedly addressed by letters from the popes and called by the fathers of Vatican II; Prof. Glendon thinks they "have lost a lot of mail," but where was the letter carrier? Isn't the shepherd-teacher the carrier of the message to the laity?

There have been some attempted lay initiatives aimed at engaging the secular culture, at the evangelization for which Vatican II called and for which Pope John Paul II pleaded in his largely ignored exhortation, *Christifideles Laici*. Nationally, Catholic Campaign for America has flopped; Catholic Alliance has flopped. Neither had much support from the bishops and, in fact, Catholic Alliance was kicked by at least two bishops as it stumbled out of the starting gate.

Sounding ever more like a defensive spear carrier for the bishops, Prof. Glendon goes on to attack the presumptuousness of Boston's Voice of the Faithful (VOTF)—a mixed bag of dissenters and of enraged Catholics loyal to the Magisterium—purporting to speak for all the laity and also to flog the hapless Governor Frank Keating. How quickly it is forgotten that Keating was appointed by the self-applauding, media-driven bishops at Dallas, along with Leon Panetta and Bob Bennett; these are secular political choices already regretted. (One has to wonder who authored the attack on Keating in the *Boston Pilot* where his words were distorted to suggest that he was urging protesting Catholics to skip Mass.)

It is obvious that the laity do have to be energized to become evangelizers, reminded of their history in the extended sense. This has to come from the bishops who need to heed the Pope's call to "be not afraid." The bishops have to emerge from under their desks, use their crosiers, and be shepherds. The crosier was once known as the "rod of correction." It is dispiriting to learn of one cardinal saying that he was "happy" with the way the bishops had handled the crisis and of another shepherd who described himself on the radio as but a "saluter." (In my own diocese, after dilatory reaction to three distinct scandals, the bishop worsened the public relations—read evangelization—disaster by having a letter read in every parish in which he insists—five times—that he acts "immediately.")

Vatican II did indeed call for lay participation in the Church and in the evangelization of the culture. It has not happened. Instead of heading out from the pews to engage the culture, part of the congregation wanted to assimilate and part wanted to charge into the sanctuary. Confusion and blurring of roles abounded as to proper ministry and the nature of evangelization. Clericalism continued in its two formats: collegial clericalism in which the fraternity bonds together to protect the image, and condescending clericalism in which the "pray, pay, and obey" attitude toward the laity continued and even the advisory parish council concept collapsed.

An understanding needs to be reached as to how this hierarchy-laity cooperation can really work. Voice of the Faithful may be dismissable as a bunch of tired Call-to-Action types, seizing the opportunity that the crisis presents to push old agendas, but the reality remains that the episcopacy has not figured out how to cope with and motivate a laity too assimilated, too sophisticated in a secular way. As but one glaring example, the bishops' educational efforts have been so diffused and the bishops personally so risk-averse that the majority of Catholics have no problem routinely supporting pro-abortion legislators.

Before the long-awaited "hour of the laity" can even begin, there must be a modus vivendi worked out between the neo-Protestantism that the enragées of VOTF seem to invite and which Prof. Glendon fears, on the one hand, and the condescending and collegial clericalism which Prof. Glendon does not mention, on the other. The bishops have to act like bishops, ignore the secular media, become countercultural, and find the courage to use their crosiers.

Charles Molineaux
McLean, Virginia

Mary Ann Glendon's portrait, "The Hour of the Laity," is incomplete. Her comments on faith illiteracy and the need for greater adult formation are valid. Yet she has overlooked two fundamental elements: trust and leadership—especially from the clergy and the hierarchy.

I know quite a few committed faithful lay Catholics, steeped in fidelity to the Magisterium, who have devoted their talents to evangelization. Sadly, they have become disenchanted with the substandard business and administrative practices that got in the way of fulfilling the mission. In one particular case, a strongly pro-life woman with superb credentials in fund-raising and communications raised serious legitimate concerns about the institution's investment policy and related fiduciary practices. The reaction from management and board leadership (both lay and episcopal) was dismissive and evasive. When she relayed this experience to a highly respected priest-friend, his comment was, "One thing you need to learn about the Catholic Church is that it values loyalty over honesty."

While devout Catholics will readily agree that the Church is fundamen-

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tally a sacramental communion, it is also true that the Church must operate as an institution. It is in this arena that the Church has much to learn from its counterparts in other faiths—particularly regarding financial support, where Catholic giving is far behind. Since philanthropy is rooted in trust, our Church leadership must come to terms with the full impact of the mistrust that has arisen from the clergy sexual-abuse scandal.

It is on these very temporal matters that the Church is much in need of reform, both structurally and culturally. The laity, faithful and literate, stands ready to serve.

Susan Emily Jordan
Watertown, Massachusetts

Mary Ann Glendon's "The Hour of the Laity," an analysis of American Catholicism's loss of identity, also accurately describes the situation of confessional Protestants (Lutheran, Reformed). As our ethnically connected communities (Swedish, German, Dutch) disperse and the privatizing pressures of American culture intensify, we too find it increasingly difficult to maintain a living confessional heritage. Our storytellers also seek out other stories to tell. And in my own denomination (the Christian Reformed Church) we also see a growing democratizing of our institutional church life accompanying the decline in awareness of Reformed identity. I find Professor Glendon's analysis illuminating, challenging, and encouragingly hopeful. Thank you.

It seems to me that there is another dimension to her analysis. Does the public silence of the laity not receive implicit encouragement when the institutional Church itself through its bishops, assemblies, synods, and social justice offices enters the public arena as one more political lobbying group? When the Church goes beyond sending President Bush a letter reminding him of Christianity's traditional teaching on just war and asks him to consider these criteria in dealing with world terrorism, and instead specifically writes to tell him that it is against the gospel to invade Iraq, what happens? First, the laity receives a message that its public involvement *as believers* is not necessary. After all, the official Church is already publicly witnessing for Christ and the gospel. What is every bit as serious is the message sent to the laity that their political judgment *as Christians* is not to be trusted. After all, there may be church members who come to the "wrong" conclusion. Now partisan politics becomes identified with the gospel itself and political disagreement becomes dissent from the gospel.

I submit that this is an untenable position for the Church. The irony is that in a feverish desire to be relevant and involved in public life, to equip God's people for more active service in the broader arena of culture and society, the institutional Church may in fact be contributing to immobilizing the laity. The result would be an even greater loss of identity, with the Church's story known by fewer and fewer. The lesson? The Church may be more relevant when as an institution it in fact does less.

John Bolt
Professor of Systematic Theology
Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, Michigan

I commend you for Mary Ann Glendon's "The Hour of the Laity," which is an excellent and timely article. I would like to make two comments on the article, the first being a friendly correction and the second a friendly amendment.

Professor Glendon describes a "great upsurge . . . of lay associations, formation programs, and ecclesial movements. These groups, so varied in their charisms, so rich in storytellers, are providing a way for Catholics to stay in touch with each other and with their tradition under diaspora conditions." She then gives a list of such groups, among which she includes Opus Dei, mistakenly in my view. Opus Dei is not an association, a formation program, or an ecclesial movement. It would not even be correct to call it a "lay organization," at least not any more correct than it is to call the Archdiocese of Boston a "lay organization." Opus Dei was founded by a priest, has a bishop at its head, and numbers many priests and bishops among its members; its full name, before it was erected as a personal prelature, was the Priestly Society of the Holy Cross and Opus Dei. This is surprising to many people who know that the great majority of the faithful of Opus Dei are laypeople, but to notice this is to make a theological point very much in tune with the rest of Prof. Glendon's article.

The charism of Opus Dei is *secularity*, which describes a missionary outlook rather than a state of life. Secularity implies that Christians look to the created world and the age in which they live not as an enemy to be fought or as a disease from which to be cured, but as something to be loved and redeemed.

Secularity does not mean *secularism*, which is loving the world without attempting to order it toward God's will. Rather, it is the conviction that Christ became incarnate and founded the Church in the world so as to sanctify all that is good and noble around us. This conviction, and the outlook and practices that follow from it, can be shared by anyone, priests as well as laypeople, which is why priests as well as laypeople can join Opus Dei. Since there are vastly more laypeople than priests, it only makes sense that there are vastly more laypeople than priests in Opus Dei. The large absolute number of lay faithful in Opus Dei to some extent follows from its charism, rather than being essential to it. (Obviously, Opus Dei hasn't cornered the market on secularity, any more than the Franciscans have cornered the market on poverty; the particular role of Opus Dei is to foster and teach secularity, and to form people to love the world passionately and pursue holiness just as passionately.)

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Secularity is opposed to a theological tendency, influenced by the beauty of the monastic vocation with its *contemptus mundi* ("contempt for the world"), to act as though to follow Christ completely requires that everyone, not just those with a monastic vocation, must reject the world and witness to the life to come where we will live "as angels" (Matthew 22:30). It is also opposed to the view Prof. Glendon describes in her article: that "the best way for the laity to be active is to be involved in ecclesiastical governance." I found Glendon's quotation from Basil Cardinal Hume to be exactly right: the Christian's task is to evangelize the world, and an excessive attention to the workings of the Church is almost always an unhelpful distraction.

Daniel P. Moloney
Doctoral Candidate in
Philosophy
University of Notre Dame
Notre Dame, Indiana

Mary Ann Glendon replies:

Russell Shaw hits the nail on the head when he writes that we must set aside the clericalist mentality if we are ever to properly sort out the relationship between clergy and laity both within the secular order and within the institutional Church. Mr. Shaw understands, as Charles Molineaux and Susan Jordan do not, that clericalism afflicts the laity as well as the clergy. That mentality leads to confusion in both spheres about their complementary roles in evangelization, and to passivity on the part of laypeople just where their active presence as Christians is most needed—in public and professional life.

Mr. Molineaux's clericalism displays itself in his complaints that bishops have not been "letter carriers" of papal messages to the laity and have failed to remind us laypeople of our history and our mission. I, too, would welcome more vigorous teaching by bishops, but does Mr. Molineaux really need a bishop to point him to what is written to and about laypeople in *Christifideles Laici*? Mr. Molineaux takes me to task for devoting little attention to bishops in my article on the laity. If I were writing about bishops, I would readily agree with him that they ought to "ignore the secular media" and "become countercultural." Mr. Molineaux would have done well to heed that advice himself last spring before using or being used by the secular media to call for the resignation of Bernard Law, one of this nation's most countercultural (pro-life, pro-poor) cardinals.

Ms. Jordan characterizes my article on the laity as "incomplete" for failing to criticize the bishops. Her letter, however, is incomplete in a more troubling way. Over the past year, Ms. Jordan has been prominently featured as a leader and organizer on the Voice of the Faithful website. Her letter speaks of trust, but her neglect to mention that affiliation does not inspire confidence. The letter puts me in mind of what Dr. Johnson once said of a dinner guest: "The more he talked of honor, the faster I counted my spoons."

It is hard to know what to make of Ms. Jordan's vague allegation that the "business practices" of unnamed Church leaders interfered with "evangelization" by an unnamed lay woman. This sounds to me like one side of an employment dispute. Since when did lay people have to receive a salary in order to bring Christ to the world? As Paule Verdet, a veteran of Catholic Action who teaches at Boston University, recently wrote to me, "The formula chosen by Voice of the Faithful to express their goal, 'Keep the faith and change the Church,' means very little to me. I'd rather say, 'Live the faith and change the world!'"

No less problematic than clericalization of the laity is secularization of the clergy. I am grateful, therefore, to Professor Bolt for making the important point that inappropriate involvement in worldly affairs by ministers, priests, and bishops may well have contributed to the reluctance of many lay people to take the initiative to be active as Christians in public life.

Finally, Daniel Moloney is correct to point out that, strictly speaking, Opus Dei is not a "lay organization." In response to his friendly letter, I can only say that I used a shorthand term for the sake of verbal economy and that I am happy to have furnished the occasion for his more accurate description of that, um, personal prelature.

The Person and the Court

Without going into the tactical merits of the current approach of the National Foundation for Life (NFFL) to "personhood litigation," I would like to challenge the logic of Paul Benjamin Linton's argument against it ("How Not to Overturn *Roe v. Wade*," November 2002).

The essence of Mr. Linton's position seems to be this: since as a matter of indisputable fact "no member of the Court—past or present—believes that the unborn child is a 'person,'" in the sense of the Constitution, it follows that efforts to have the personhood of the fetus defined by law are worse than hopeless. Not only do such efforts divert scarce energy and resources from more promising pro-life initiatives, but they might lead the Court to actually deny the personhood of the fetus, which would be a serious setback for the pro-life movement as a whole.

My main objection to this line of reasoning is that it seems to treat the moral truth of the matter as if it were entirely beside the point. Mr. Linton writes almost as if it doesn't matter whether or not an unborn child is, in reality, a person, morally entitled to the protection of the law. If Justices do not hold it, then any attempt to establish it as true is an exercise in futility.

But the question of whether an unborn child is a person is much more than academic. It has everything to do with the most fundamental principles of our nation's founding, and

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the moral underpinnings of our institutions of justice.

From our beginning as a nation we have held that all men are created equal, and are endowed with the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. But our understanding of who "men" are has developed dramatically over time. Such developments do not occur out of thin air. They come from persuasion. And persuasion typically begins with the staunch moral commitment of a tiny minority. They win over the majority in time, not, primarily, by their rhetorical brilliance or their strategic acumen, but by their patient and uncompromising witness to the truth. It is truth that commends itself eventually to the conscience of society as whole. At least, this is what we hope and pray for.

Thus, while discussion of legal strategies and practical pros and cons in the pro-life movement is all well and good, none of it compares in importance to sustained reflection and debate about the absolutely central questions of the moral realities at stake in abortion. If we lose interest in those, we are lost indeed.

Kathleen van Schaijik
Ann Arbor, Michigan

I was disappointed by Paul Benjamin Linton's article criticizing a litigation strategy by the National Foundation for Life (NFFL) advancing the personhood of the unborn. Everyone can appreciate the wisdom of avoiding a strategy doomed to failure, creating precedent even more hostile to the natural rights of the unborn. Still one must ask: Can things really get any worse? In *Roe*, the Court concluded that "the word 'person' as used in the Fourteenth Amendment does not include the unborn"—a conclusion that *Casey* left intact. Thus, one is left to wonder how the consequences could be worse should NFFL's strategy fail.

Justice Antonin Scalia has gained admirers by arguing that the Constitution is "silent" on abortion, so that the states are free to protect the practice or prohibit it as they see fit. Whatever virtues Scalia may possess as a judge, this argument must be regarded as a weakness. If unborn human beings are constitutional persons, they are entitled to the same protections afforded others. Presumably these protections would prevent women from killing their children in utero.

Although the Constitution does not expressly state whether "person" includes the unborn, it is similarly silent with respect to any number of constitutional terms. The First Amendment does not define "religion," yet the Court does not let states do so, nor does the Court shrink from giving content to the term in its decisions. Likewise with "speech," "probable cause," "searches and seizures," "due process," and "equal protection"—undefined terms all. Instead, since Chief Justice John Marshall's day, the Court has insisted that it is "the province and duty of the judicial department to say what the law is." Thus, it is incumbent on the Court to give meaning to the constitutional term "person."

Mr. Linton is right to note that none of the Justices have endorsed or even appeared open to the claim that an unborn child is a constitutional person. Still, even in the most deplorable aspects of its abortion decision, the Court has yet to make the naked declaration that not all human beings are constitutional persons.

Mr. Linton is also right that the failure to recognize the unborn's personhood reflects a defect in judicial will, not intellect. It is precisely in this regard that NFFL's strategy has much to recommend it, not because it would succeed in court, but because it would force judges to argue in favor of such an indefensible position.

An essential characteristic of the rule of law is the reasoned elaboration of judicial decisions. It would be incongruous for courts to admit that an unborn child is a human being and to simultaneously deny him or her the protections of legal personhood. With the notable exception of slavery and a few wholly discredited decisions such as *Buck v. Bell*, the categories of "human being" and "person" under the Constitution have been coextensive. Thus, to exclude some human beings from the protections of personhood cannot fit within our jurisprudence. Although some contend that *Roe* was a logical development in our law, *Roe* and its progeny constitute an aberration, a source of incoherence, a mutant strain of "law" unable to thrive without artificial aid.

Even if the NFFL is unsuccessful, forcing judges to employ reason and not simply will and forcing them to make arguments for such an untenable position might serve a greater political purpose. It might serve to rouse the public to see such decisions, and all the Court's abortion decisions, for what they truly are, namely (in Justice Byron White's words), "an exercise of raw judicial power." Such recognition might lead to the wider public conversation that is needed and which Mr. Linton's article implicitly recognizes and proposes.

It is certainly true that even if the Court were to overturn *Roe*, recognize the unborn's personhood, and declare unconstitutional laws permitting abortion, the procedure would still take place. A judicial declaration would not change the hearts and minds of *Roe*'s proponents. The culture of "choice," as a culture of death, would still rule the day.

What is needed is not merely a legal solution to the slaughter of innocents, but a cultural one. Society needs to engage in an honest conversation about the reality of abortion, a conversation that was largely muted by the Court's decision in *Roe*. Politics and political discourse have a vital role to play in this process.

One would hope that such conversation would take place if the Court were to overturn *Roe* and place the matter in the hands of the states. Obviously, such a conversation would

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have to precede a constitutional amendment. In either case, the real question is, How can the issue be brought to that moment? The NFFL strategy, even if unlikely to succeed in court, may help advance the cause of the unborn in other ways.

John M. Breen
Loyola University School of Law
Chicago, Illinois

Paul Benjamin Linton replies:

Contrary to the implications of Kathleen van Schaijik's letter, I have not "lost interest" in "the moral realities at stake in abortion." Quite the contrary. It is precisely because of those realities that I have been engaged in the pro-life movement for the last fourteen years. And "the moral realities" *should* inform the public debate over abortion, state and federal legislation (for example, fetal homicide statutes and statutes extending wrongful death actions to all unborn children), and, where appropriate, litigation.

But in my judgment, *constitutional* recognition of the rights of the unborn child will come about, if at all, only through an amendment to the Constitution, not a court decision. It is to the former goal (an amendment) that the "persuasion" mentioned in Ms. van Schaijik's letter should be directed. The political branches of government are much more susceptible to this type of persuasion than the judicial branch, particularly the Supreme Court, which continues to pretend that it laid the abortion issue to rest in its decision in *Casey v. Planned Parenthood* eleven years ago. In attempting to stake out the moral high ground, Ms. van Schaijik ignores the virtue of prudence. Is it morally prudent to pursue a litigation strategy that is likely to result only in more court decisions holding, as the Third Circuit already has in the *Whitman* case, that being human is not a sufficient basis for being considered a "person"?

Professor John Breen makes a number of points in his letter. First, he asks whether, given the Supreme Court's holding in *Roe* that "the word 'person' as used in the Fourteenth Amendment does not include the unborn," the possible failure of the NFFL's litigation strategy could be any worse. The short answer to this question is an unqualified "Yes." In *Roe*, the Court, per Justice Harry Blackmun, professed an inability to state when human life begins. While I, like many others, found this faux agnosticism to be incredible on its face, a fresh reaffirmation of the Court's holding in *Roe* that the unborn child is *not* a person, in light of what is now known about fetal development, would hurt, not help, the pro-life cause. Such a decision would tend to reinforce the repellent doctrine preached by some academics and others that having the attributes of humanity (i.e., being genetically of the species *Homo sapiens*, being alive and developing) provides no claim to the protection of the law. Would that be helpful?

Second, after a short critique of Justice Antonin Scalia's view that the Constitution's "silence" on abortion disqualifies the Supreme Court from considering whether the unborn child is a constitutional person—a view which I must emphasize is shared by Chief Justice William Rehnquist and Justice Clarence Thomas (and in which the late Justice Byron White concurred)—Prof. Breen states that "it is incumbent on the Court to give meaning to the constitutional term 'person.'" The problem is that the Court already *has* given meaning to the term, in *Roe*, and that meaning does *not* include the unborn child. I do not disagree with Prof. Breen that unborn children *should* be considered constitutional persons—my disagreement is *how* that recognition should be brought about. In light of the evidence set forth in my article, is it likely that such recognition is going to come about through "personhood" litigation?

Third, Prof. Breen posits that "it would be incongruous for courts to admit that an unborn child is a human being and to simultaneously deny him or her the protections of legal personhood." Incongruous, perhaps, but not inconceivable. Indeed, that is precisely what the Third Circuit did in the *Whitman* case, decided only five years ago, and what the New York Court of Appeals did more than thirty years ago in the *Byrn* case, in rejecting a "personhood" challenge to the pre-*Roe*, New York abortion-on-demand statute enacted in 1970. Do we want more decisions like these?

Fourth, Prof. Breen suggests that court decisions denying legal personhood to unborn human beings would "rouse the public to see such decisions, and all the Court's abortion decisions, for what they truly are, namely (in Justice Byron White's words), 'an exercise of raw judicial power.'" This fond hope has not been borne out in our experience. Prof. Breen himself acknowledges that society's need "to engage in an honest conversation about the reality of abortion . . . was largely muted by the Court's decision in *Roe*." And that was thirty years ago, *before* abortion became embedded in the culture. More recently, we saw the Supreme Court create a constitutional right to kill a child in the course of its birth in a decision (*Stenberg v. Carhart*) that betrayed no ignorance "about the reality of abortion." Where was the public outrage?

Prof. Breen's letter proceeds on the assumption, common to the thinking underlying the NFFL's litigation strategy, that the Supreme Court somehow can be "forced" to take cases it does not want to review and to decide issues it does not wish to resolve. That assumption is clearly wrong, as any attorney familiar with Supreme Court practice would attest. With few exceptions not relevant here, the Court's jurisdiction is discretionary, not mandatory. The Court picks and chooses its cases and can easily avoid addressing issues that, in the Court's opinion, could

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embarrass the Court or undermine its credibility. Cases attempting to overturn *Roe* on the basis of the personhood of the unborn child, the rights of the father to prevent an abortion, or the rights of the mother to have a relationship with her child (all theories that have been pursued at one time or another by the NFFL and others) have never been accepted for review by the Supreme Court and, in my opinion, never will be. *Roe* will be overruled when five Justices on the Court agree that the Constitution does not confer upon women a right to have an abortion. Then, and only then, will *Roe* be discarded.

The NFFL's "Global Project" is a wrong turn down a one-way street with no exit.

The Educator's Task

The epiphany realized by Gregory Roper ("Teachers' Guilt," November 2002) is one more of resignation than restoration. It is not so much that Professor Roper is disenthralled as that the nature of what it is to be a teacher is now for him an alien enterprise wherein the role of teacher is replaced by the role of instructor: my task is to present the syllabus; if you get something out of the course, well, good, and if not, well, too bad.

For those most involved, teaching is a profession that calls on one to strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield. For many others it is worthy if difficult work that sometimes rewards and sometimes frustrates. And for still others it is enough to publish the Protocols of Roper and post a "do not disturb" sign.

The teachers' unions that reject all suggestion that teachers are in some measure accountable for the outcome of their professional activities will find welcome validation in Prof. Roper's observations. But it remains a puzzlement: Just when did commitment and responsibility become liberal quackery?

Jerome Steen
Trenton, New Jersey

Gregory Roper replies:
Well, I might ask: Just when did demanding commitment and responsibility from one's students become a sign of bad teaching? Jerome Steen's letter exhibits precisely the kind of pedagogical theology (not "quackery"—my argument suggests philosophical error, not incompetence) that I was discussing in my essay, one that puts all the responsibility on the teacher's back and little-to-none on the student's. A teacher who asks students to accept responsibility for their work is apparently to Mr. Steen a mere "instructor" who has somehow "yield[ed]" to "resignation." He makes the mistake of believing that demanding responsibility of one's students necessarily implies a lack of hard, dedicated commitment to those students and their good.

Take an example. Let's say I prepare for over three hours—as I just did—to present *Aeneid* Book 12 to my students, crafting questions not just to "present the syllabus," as in a lecture, but to lead them in a discussion of this thorny text so that they will be inspired, intrigued, informed, educated. And let's say that "Bill," an otherwise fine student, chooses not to read the assigned text for that day. Whose fault is it if Bill gets little to nothing out of the sparkling discussion that results when the other students, who *did* prepare, engage with my questions? Mr. Steen would have it that it is *my* fault, that Bill is an innocent child whom I have inadequately "striven for" and "sought after," and thus not "found." I say hogwash, and those who believe Bill to be without blame are victims of a Rousseauian denial of both original sin and free will; they thus condescend to their students, treating them as children, rather than engaging them as adults.

Mr. Steen might wish to see the rest of my Principles: among them are "I want you to succeed" and "Think of me as a coach, not a judge." And he might be interested in knowing that I advocate ruthless testing at all levels, for teachers as well as for students—because I know that, in a fallen world, most of us need the stick as well as the carrot to encourage us to do the hard work involved in becoming educated.

St. Paul on Slavery

Richard John Neuhaus cites Galatians and Colossians as saying that the Bible condemns slavery (While We're At It, November 2002). This seems to reflect Paul's observation that in Christ there is no Jew, Greek, freeman, or slave.

But the fact that in Christ there are no differences among us didn't stop Paul from explicitly accepting slavery. What does Father Neuhaus make of Paul's admonition in Ephesians 6 where he states that slaves should obey their masters (masters being required to treat slaves kindly)? It seems Paul thinks of slavery as just another difference that doesn't make a difference. So Fr. Neuhaus glosses over, rather lightly, the acceptance of slavery it took Christianity nineteen centuries to expunge.

Bob Puharic
Whitehall, Pennsylvania

RJN replies:
Slavery was an institutional given in ancient times, and continued to be that in almost the entire world through the eighteenth century. Christian teaching undercut it at its principled root by denying that a human being could be mere chattel and affirming, as in the Letter to Philemon, that a slave is a brother in Christ owed all the duties of love. It took a long time before it was recognized that love also and necessarily entails freedom from slavery. Ideas have consequences, but they often work very slowly.

A Prejudicial Reading?

One must expect to be attacked when one writes an op-ed piece as controversial as my *Wall Street Journal* col-

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umn, "The Pope Has Let Us Down" (August 25, 2002). But one ought to be able to expect an attack coming from someone of the stature of Richard John Neuhaus to be fair, at the very least. His broadside against me (While We're At It, November 2002) is inaccurate in its facts and unjust in its conclusions.

If the only acquaintance FIRST THINGS readers had with my *Journal* piece was through Father Neuhaus' selective rendering, they would not know that I wrote of my "tears and awe and gratitude for this holy Pope," a pope whose writings I described as "a treasure for all mankind," and of whom I predicted that "my descendants will surely and rightly call . . . St. John Paul the Great." I wrote those things because I believe them. Yet Fr. Neuhaus ignored these words. Why? Because, I believe, those words make it harder for him to advance his hysterical straw-man thesis that I wish to say "that the heroic life and witness of John Paul has been for naught."

I don't intend to rewrite the column here, but Fr. Neuhaus' reading of it is so prejudicial that the record should be set straight. The clear meaning of my column was that the Holy Father's lack of effective governance of the Church over the course of his long pontificate has contributed to the catastrophe now upon the Church in America—and that, given the goodness and greatness of the man, is a profoundly sad and tragic thing. Indeed, I began my column praising the Pope for his homily preached days earlier to two million Poles, which condemned modern man's embrace of "freedom without truth or responsibility." However (I wrote), it is painfully difficult to square the man who has so bravely witnessed to these truths as Universal Pastor with the man who has presided over an episcopate that has ignored his clear and welcome teaching—and has suffered no penalty for its defiance of papal authority and Church teaching. Not even the rape of children by deviant priests, and the effective tolerance of same by bishops, has moved the Pope to discipline these men. How is it that a holy man like John Paul can appear to care so little about the suffering his bishops have allowed to be visited on Catholic children and families by sexually abusive priests? It is a question that troubles all of us who love and obey this Pope, but I don't see how it can be ignored for the sake of keeping our consciences untroubled.

A secondary point I made—but which was ignored by Fr. Neuhaus—was that this neglect has also made itself manifest in other areas of Church life, such as liturgical abuses and the rejection of Catholic teaching by Catholic institutions. This is what I meant when I wrote that it is hard to tell my little boy "that it can be dangerous to his body and soul to trust priests." I have little fear that a priest will molest my son. Yet it is still an outrage to be put in the position of having to explain to a child after Sunday Mass, time and time again, that the Church actually teaches something different from what Father said in his homily—in other words, that Father is something of a fraud. John Paul cannot be expected to police every pulpit in Christendom, of course, but the decay in catechesis and Church discipline that has occurred on his watch is undeniable.

My message in the column was that the Pope, by his misgovernance, is hollowing out the meaning and authority of his prophetic witness. Who is supposed to take the Holy Father seriously when he thunders against the evils of the modern world when he cannot, or will not, move against the evils perpetrated by his bishops? For years, I and Catholics like me have found every possible excuse for the Holy Father's inaction. "Oh, if only John Paul knew!" I've said to myself on many occasions. Well, he knows. What are we supposed to make of this? Is it so far off the mark to wonder if the protection of the perceived interests of the institutional Church means more to the Holy Father than the faithful and their needs?

If asking those questions makes me "so very American," as Fr. Neuhaus puts it (with a barely veiled accusation of disloyalty), then I proudly accept the label. I affirm that I am a believing orthodox Roman Catholic, but if being American means anything, it means not acquiescing in being treated like chattel by one's supposed betters. The laity and their children are not mere subjects meant to be at the unquestioned disposal of ecclesial monarchs. Why is it disloyal to protest the way that the Catholic hierarchy, including the Pope, has treated us in the matter of the sexual-abuse scandal? If Fr. Neuhaus does not perceive that this is a question on the minds of very many faithful Catholics, then he is even more out of touch than I thought. And if he does not recognize the justice of that question, and the pain asking it causes a Catholic father, then such hard-hearted clericalism makes him—well, possibly a candidate for the episcopate.

Speaking for myself, I cannot think indifference to the harm suffered by the victims of clergy sexual abuse or to the harm done to the Church itself would in any way be consistent with my profession of faith as a Catholic or my calling as a journalist. Along those lines, I note that Fr. Neuhaus has spilled buckets of ink writing about the scandal, but surprisingly little of it addressing the plight of sex-abuse victims and their families. Fr. Neuhaus has no children, obviously, but I cannot help thinking he spends little, if any, time talking to Catholic lay people as well as fellow clerics and theologians. I hope that he will avail himself of the opportunity to contact grieving Catholic mothers and fathers like Horace and Janet Patterson of Wichita, Kansas, whose testimony

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helped my understanding of this crisis tremendously. Their son Eric committed suicide at age twenty-nine—one of five men, all suicides, molested by the same priest in the 1980s, a priest (now in jail) known by his bishop to be a molester, yet assigned to parish work anyway. Does what happened in Wichita have nothing to do with Rome? Maybe the Editor-in-Chief of FIRST THINGS thinks so, but if that is the case, he is not only wrong, but is circling the wagons around increasingly smaller company.

Rod Dreher
Brooklyn, New York

RJN replies:
It is true that I quoted and criticized those parts of Mr. Dreher's article with which I disagreed, not those with which I agreed. I leave it to readers to judge whether what I have written about the scandals has been unduly deferential toward or defensive of bishops and indifferent to the victims. Any fair-minded reader of Mr. Dreher's essay, I believe, would have concluded that he does fear that priests might molest his son, not that bad homilies pose a danger to the boy's body. Mr. Dreher will, I trust, be pleased to know that I have had many more discussions of these matters with lay people than with clerics. As for my analysis of the sins of clericalism, please see last month's commentary on that, "The Bishops in Charge."

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Opinion

San Francisco Sacred (I)

Michael Linton

We do not customarily look to opera for moral edification. Examples abound: twins, separated at birth, reunite and conceive a superman child before one is killed by his father (Wagner's *Die Walküre*); a polygamous American seduces and later abandons an Asian girl and their child (Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*); through deceit, seduction, and murder a prostitute becomes empress of Rome and finds true love (Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea*); to prove the inconstancy of feminine love a cynical aristocrat convinces two young lovers to seduce each other's girlfriend (Mozart's *Cosi fan tutte*). There are exceptions to this rule, of course (Beethoven's *Fidelio* and Britten's *Billy Budd* come to mind), but generally opera has been a dramatic form more devoted to slash-and-dash murder and mayhem than somber reflection and spiritual insight. Yet spiritual insight is just what the San Francisco Opera (SFO) has recently offered its patrons in at least two internationally significant productions. In October 2000, the SFO premiered American composer Jake Heggie's *Dead Man Walking*. In the fall of 2002 it presented the first American performance of Olivier Messiaen's *Saint François d'Assise*.

In many ways the two works could not be more different. The one highlights a brutal and malevolent murderer, the second is about the most charitable Christian of the Middle Ages. The music of one, almost reactionary in its traditionalism, was written by a relatively unknown composer at the beginning of his career. The other, frequently and extravagantly dissonant, was composed at the close of an internationally recognized composer's sixty-year career. In one a modern story with strong political and social implications is universalized into a morality tale; in the other medieval hagiography is shaped into a dramatic liturgy where matters of the world—politics, economics, and even time itself—are not so much ignored as made inconsequential. Yet the works are united not only by their artistic excellence but also by their fundamental themes of fear, love, and Christian redemption.

Jake Heggie's piece was commissioned by the SFO in 1998 as part of his work as composer-in-residence. Selecting Terrence McNally as his librettist, Heggie chose the story of the relationship between a nun and a convicted killer drawn from Sister Helen Prejean's 1993 book *Dead Man Walking: An Eyewitness Account of the Death Penalty in the U.S.* Sister Helen is real, but her book's protagonist, Joseph De Rocher, is the fictional composite of several death row inmates with whom the nun worked at Louisiana's Angola State Penitentiary.

Opening with a brutal scene in which De Rocher, helped by his brother, rapes and murders a young couple, the opera moves to Sister Helen teaching the spiritual "He Will Gather Us Around" to children at a charity shelter. De Rocher and the nun have been pen pals, and just one month before his execution the convict has asked her to visit him. The nun reluctantly agrees, and meets a bitter man who defiantly proclaims himself to be the victim of a frame-up. He asks her to be his spiritual advisor, and during the following two acts the nun accompanies the murderer, his family, and his victims' families on the tortuous path to the execution. Just before his death, the murderer confesses to the nun the full story of his crime and asks the parents of his victims to forgive him, hoping that they will find some relief in his death.

After its first performance, the *San Francisco Chronicle* called the opera "something of a masterpiece" and the *Manchester Guardian* wrote that it "makes the most concentrated impact of any piece of American music theater since *West Side Story*." Because of the demand for tickets, the SFO extended the original seven performances to nine. The opera was again hailed when the New York City Opera presented it in the fall of 2002, and productions have been mounted by the Cincinnati Opera, Opera Pacific, the Austin Lyric Opera, and the State Opera of Southern Australia. In 2002, Erato released a two-CD set of the opera's original San Francisco performance and PBS broadcast a documentary on the making of the opera.

No wonder San Francisco had to extend its run and opera companies everywhere are eager to mount the work. It is gripping. McNally's libretto is perhaps the best ever written by an American and Heggie matches the story with an inventive and lyric score that becomes more moving and admirable upon each hearing. Not since Benjamin Britten has a composer shown both such a sure command of dramatic pacing and such a keen ear for the rhythmic setting of English. In a series of eighteen scenes Heggie and McNally move us through self-doubt, exultation, prayer, vengeance, tragedy, self-dis-

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covery, repentance, and ultimately redemption. The opera is peopled with deeply drawn characters; even the incidental ones—the members of the murderer's family, a highway patrolman, the warden, the parents of the murderer's victims—are multidimensional. Heggie and McNally do not mute the violence of their subject: the opening scene and the hatred of the victim's family toward the murderer are both unsparingly presented, yet the generally dark path to execution is lightened by lovely—and appropriate—comic moments. And De Rocher's final confession to Sister Helen, which in lesser hands could have seemed abrupt, contrived, and even corny, is thoroughly convincing and deeply moving.

Operatic villains are generally easy to create; heroines, and especially religious ones, are less so. Verdi's Iago, Puccini's Scarpia, and Gounod's Méphistophélès all make the women against whom they conspire seem wooden by comparison. The murderer Joseph De Rocher is a powerfully drawn figure, yet Heggie never lets the murderer overshadow Sister Helen. Heggie saves his best music for Sister Helen and in so doing creates a major artistic portrayal of a woman of faith. The role very well may become, along with Richard Strauss' Octavian, one of the most important and rewarding roles for a mezzo-soprano in the repertory.

But despite the importance of the nun and Joseph De Rocher for the story, the opera really isn't about them. And, although it can be interpreted as such, neither is it primarily a political indictment of state execution. (Oddly enough, it can actually be seen as a strong statement in support of the death penalty since it is through the confluence of the nun's care to the murderer, along with the imminence of his death, that De Rocher is finally brought to the self-recognition that, in turn, makes his redemption possible.) Rather, the opera is about the path to salvation—or as Sister Helen sings in the opera's only true aria, "This journey. This journey to Christ. This journey to my God. This journey to myself. To my Jesus. To this man. This journey to the truth. . . ." Heggie's "dead man walking" is every man. Everyone in the story—the nuns, the condemned men on death row, the murderer's mother and family, the victims and their parents, the warden, the cop, the priest—is making that journey. It is frequently a terrible journey, but they are all on it, hurting or helping each other along the way, stumbling, starting again, sometimes going horribly wrong. When Sister Helen tries to teach her students the spiritual at the opera's beginning, she falters, distracted. At the opera's final moment, after the murderer has finished his own journey, she sings it again, easily and radiantly. Convoluted, twisted, terrible, and fogged though the path may be, God stands at its end, eager to gather us all in His embrace. Through the course of the opera's violence, the desperation of its characters, the nobility of simple deeds, and the determination of Sister Helen and her fellow nuns to be Christ for others, Heggie's music reaches beyond the proscenium to gather us up into the chorus of hope and redemption.

Part II of this article will appear in the March 2003 issue.

MICHAEL LINTON *is Head of the Division of Composition and Music Theory at Middle Tennessee State University.*

The Embodied Self

Michael Novak

In the very first year of his papacy, Pope John Paul II planted a time bomb in the Church that is not likely to go off until about twenty years from now. Beginning in September 1979, he devoted fifteen minutes of each weekly general audience over a five-year period to sustained, dense, and rigorous meditations on human sexuality. Reflecting on key biblical passages, the Pope began by wondering what it meant to Adam, walking in the garden, to discover that he was alone as an embodied self. He also asked what it means to Karol Wojtyla, and the rest of us, to be embodied selves.

Even during the papal conclave that elected him, Cardinal Wojtyla had been working on these lectures, intending to use them in his teaching in Krakow. He was unsatisfied with the reception to Paul VI's *Humanae Vitae* of 1968, and unsatisfied, too, with the state of the argument in the Church, thinking that it did not go as far as it could in answering certain basic puzzlements that humans have about themselves. In particular, certain passages in the Bible about male and female, love and lust, matrimony and divorce are not transparent in their meaning, and stirred Wojtyla's wonder. What on earth could they mean? To get to the bottom of the mystery that we are to ourselves, must we not go down more deeply into a philosophy of the human self, that is, the human subject?

In the 129 public addresses that Pope John Paul II delivered over those five years, in four long sequences of a varying number of weeks, he went back to the Word of God to try to fathom the Creator's intentions in this puzzling work of His. The Pope began with Adam in his solitude. Adam walked alone as a species, neither vegetable nor mineral, neither God nor animal, and not an angel, either. He stood alone in all creation. He did not have

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the company of his own kind. Neither could he procreate, and so assure the continuation of his species. His was a poignant solitude, a truly silent solitude. It was not, the Bible tells us, good. It lacked an essential part.

And so from Adam's flesh—to underline the oneness of the human essence—God created Eve. Not just "woman," but a person with a name, face, shape, and personality. One inescapable point of this account is that the human being is two-in-one. "Male and female He created them in the beginning." To make man two-in-one was God's intention, from even before time began.

Further, if the human being is made "in the image of God" (the second point the Bible insists upon), it is as "male and female" together. Something in our male-and-femaleness-together pulls back the veil on what God is like. The distinctness of our being male and female is revelatory of God's own being and inner life.

We human beings are not "persons" in the way an angel is. We are each embodied male or female, and it is in our communion with one another that we are "images of God." Each gender alone is incompletely human. We are made for the communion of male with female.

Why then, so soon, did Adam and Eve become "aware of their nakedness" and filled with "shame"? That this shame is not due to their bodies, or merely to their being naked, is made plain by one glaring fact: shame had no part in their original being; it is not of their essence. On the contrary, the shame arises only when Adam and Eve violate the will written into their natures by their Creator, when they use each other to suit their own individual appetites, wishing to put self in the place of God. Their shame arises when they become enemies of one another, through the war for dominance on the part of each. Then they must hide from one another, and in order to become master, learn the arts of seduction.

Their sexed individuality was given Adam and Eve so that, in becoming one, they might heal their essential incompleteness, and come into existence as the one essence God intended "from the beginning." By willing the good of the other—that is, by self-giving love—male and female become one in spirit, will, and truth. That gift comes not solely from one, unrequited; the gift of one is matched by the gift of the other, freely given; their love is mutual. To speak of Adam and Eve as "in communion" is to capture their gift of each to each. Their beings come to rest in one another.

Thus, however imperfectly, our sexuality reveals to us that, whatever else He might be like, our Creator lives in self-giving communion. This experience of communion between woman and man, self-giving, in mutuality, and without either's dominance, is more like the inner life of God than anything else that we encounter in creation. To self-giving communion, willing wholly the good of the other as other, giving of self freely and in accord with the creative will of the Creator, nothing else in the experience of the race comes close.

Wojtyla's views on sex reflect the riches of the Catholic tradition—erotic, poetic, profound. In two of the deepest, most lovely lines in the poetry of any language Dante captures the essence of this love and all its range:

> *En' la sua volonta e nostra pace . . .*
> *L'amor che move il sole e l'altre stelle*
>
> *In His will, our peace . . .*
> *The love that moves the sun and other stars.*

Propelled by its most divine-like energies, *l'amor* is sexual, erotic, physical, and in that form its *communio* is procreative. From two-in-one there comes a third. From the love of two there comes the miraculous and startling creativity of birthing, pushing forth a newborn child—not just "child," but "girl" or "boy."

Consider the relation of Wojtyla to Aquinas. Thomas Gilby once said of Aquinas that he paid things, in the act of rendering them in their complexity, "the compliment of attempting to do so without breaking into poetry." Yet, as Gilby shows in putting together a miscellany of Aquinas' texts on love, Aquinas did not fall short of poetry by much:

> Love is more unitive than knowledge in seeking the thing, not the thing's reason; its bent is to a real union. . . . Other effects of love he also enumerates: a reciprocal abiding [*mutua inhaesio*], of lover and beloved together as one; a transport [*exstasis*] out of the self to the other; an ardent cherishing [*zelus*] of another; a melting [*liquefactio*] so that the heart is unfrozen and open to be entered; a longing in absence [*languor*], heat in pursuit [*fervor*], and enjoyment in presence [*fruitio*]. In delight, too, there is an all at once wholeness and timelessness that reflect the *tota simul* of eternity; an edge of sadness similar to that of the Gift of Knowledge; an expansion of spirit; a complete fulfillment of activity without satiety, *for they that drink shall yet thirst.*

Wojtyla, too, is a poet, but he grew up under Nazi occupation, and was driven to deeper depths by the knowledge of sheer terror and the need for steely will. When all around his friends were being brutalized, dehumanized, and exterminated with ruthlessly systematic purpose, the "communion of subjects" came to seem to him more rare and precious. It was to the inte-

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riority of the human subject that events had driven him. Where Aquinas had written, "Love is more unitive than knowledge in seeking the *thing*, not the *thing's* reason," Wojtyla would write "subject" in the place of "thing." Rigorously, he would take Aquinas and drive every term of his analysis inward, toward the subject, and toward that *communio* in which two subjects fuse as one. The only trustworthy path, experience had shown the young Wojtyla, is self-donating will, willing the good of the other, no matter how one feels. Under terror, one's own feelings cannot at all times be trusted.

For the young priest and later pope, even celibacy is understood in the light of matrimony, the sacrament by which the Creator revealed to humankind the *communio* of His own nature. Thus, the second set of the Pope's meditations, begun in 1980, concerns the trick question the Sadduccees put to Jesus: If a woman was married and widowed seven times, with which husband shall she be joined in Paradise? Jesus answered that the Sadduccees misapprehended Paradise. It is not that humans there are bodiless but that *communio* comes to the fore, communion with "the Love that moves the sun and other stars," in Whose will is peace. The unity with God that constitutes Paradise is to will the good of the other, to be one with God's own love for all.

This is the love that enflames the person who commits his life, for that Kingdom of Heaven's sake, to celibacy. He wills totally the will of God, in Himself and for all humankind. His *communio* does not falsify, it vindicates, the love that a man offers to a woman, a woman to a man, in its total self-givingness. The two kinds of love, matrimonial and celibate, shed a kind of light upon each other. Matrimony reminds us of the earthiness of human clay, breathed upon by God's love, and of the completed, united twoness of our essential nature. G. K. Chesterton was being more than merely witty when he defined the married couple as a four-legged animal infused with love. But celibacy dramatizes for us that the source of unity in love is the total giving of two wills, focused on the good of the other. Celibacy is no denial of the body, only a leapfrog over to the gift of will for the Creator and Redeemer's use. Married and celibate teach each other depths of love.

In this perspective, the Pope thoroughly refashioned the standpoint of *Humanae Vitae*. Instead of visualizing the moral task in married love as "endurance," the Pope asks: How can married love grow into the fullness of human nature, in its highest possibilities for self-giving love? Instead of focusing on "birth control," the Pope turns to the first of the cardinal virtues, practical wisdom (*prudentia, phronesis*), and speaks of the excellence of prudence in deciding, in God's presence, how many children to have—how to "regulate" fertility. Practical experience teaches a couple that, willy-nilly, they will need to practice abstinence at times, just as they at times enjoy ecstasy—and the tension of that drama is a large part of human excellence. Prudence, temperance, justice, courage—excellence in all four cardinal virtues heightens excellence in married love.

Instead of asking, "What am I forbidden to do?," moral inquiry ought to ask: "How do we shape our lives of sexual love in ways that fulfill our dignity?" The Pope suggests that married couples regard sexual love in marriage as a school, always bringing out in them new excellences, and bringing them deeper into participation in God's own love within them.

Four things are novel in Wojtyla's thought on "love and responsibility" (to allude to a title of another of his books). First, there is a turn to interiority, to subjectivity, beyond the Thomistic synthesis. He could not have done this without the experience of modernity, and the simultaneous turn of some phenomenologists to both the subject and the real.

The second is the refusal to separate the "person" from its body. Wojtyla refuses to adopt a physicalist theory of sexual love. He refuses to be a Manichee. He refuses to be gnostic. He loves the human body—has always enjoyed his own strength and vitality, climbing in the mountains, kayaking in mountain waters, until an assassin's bullet and other maladies made him bear the cross of the body's infirmities. He loves the sights and smells and sounds of the liturgy of the Holy Mass. He loves the oils of the sacraments. Everywhere he sees the ways that spirit and body are made for one another, enter into one another, interpenetrate in the secret recesses of our being. Embodied selves, indeed. Thus do we believe in the resurrection of the embodied self.

The third insight is that the unity of man and woman comes in the giving of the will, each to each. The giving of the self makes truthful the bodies being one, and the bodies being one express united selves. The heart of love is a *communio* of selves. In matrimony, human selves are one in both their bodies and their selves.

The fourth insight is that in our sexuality lie glimpses of the Godhead. Our vision of God becomes clearest when our minds grasp the communion of persons in matrimony. Marriage between man and woman is the most beautiful (as Aquinas put it) of all friendships known to us. God is more like the communion of persons than He is like anything else we know of. That, at least, is the way He has revealed Himself to us, not only in Scripture and in His Son, but also in the way our embodied selves are joined in matrimony.

At the very head of the Book it is written: "Male and female He made them from the beginning. He made them in His image." Should we miss the point of that, it's hard to believe we'd get much right about the rest.

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For some time, Western culture has been in a fever of free love, contraception, and the pill. Doing what we will with our bodies—doing what our bodies will—has become a worldwide passion, the acme of fulfillment. The project must not be going very well. Why else would there be so many books on sex, so many manuals, so many grapplings to understand the widespread disappointment?

But just wait. Boredom is as boredom does. Disordered sexual love and death are partners in a deathly dance. There will come a time when minds are open. When women and men begin to wonder, When He wrote Eros into our embodied selves, what did God intend?

Then it may be that they will not find many guides as daring as Karol Wojtyla.

Michael Novak *holds the George Frederick Jewett Chair at the American Enterprise Institute.*

An Unnecessary Evil

Clarke D. Forsythe

When William Wilberforce rose in Parliament on the evening of May 11, 1789 to give his maiden speech against the slave trade, he argued that the trade was both inhumane and unnecessary for the British economy. His words were part of a conscious strategy that began in 1787, when the British Abolition Committee "concluded that the general, moral case against the slave trade had been made and that the way to induce a positive readiness to end the trade was to demonstrate that it was impolitic as well as unjust and inhumane." Consequently, the Committee "more particularly directed their attention to the plea of political necessity which is frequently urged to justify . . . this traffic." As the historian Roger Anstey observed, this was the beginning of a conscious program of "advocacy which was henceforth to be frequent in the whole abolition campaign." That program took twenty years, until Parliament abolished the slave trade throughout the Empire in 1807.

The cause for life in America has yet to reach the second stage. The argument that the unborn are human lives has been largely won. It is now time for a coherent, sustained, and concerted effort to demonstrate that abortion is "impolitic"—bad for women as well as the unborn. As was the case with the slave trade, such a program is needed to counter the notion among many Americans that abortion is a "necessary evil." In carrying their argument to Middle America, pro-lifers must go beyond preaching to the anti-abortion choir: they need to make their case in ways that appeal to those who are currently undecided or conflicted on the issue. As Chesterton put it, "We must either not argue with a man at all, or we must argue on his grounds, and not ours."

A 1991 Gallup Poll on "Abortion and Moral Beliefs" found that 77 percent of Americans believe that abortion is at least the taking of human life, if not murder itself. More specifically, 49 percent considered abortion "murder," while an additional 28 percent thought of it as "the taking of human life." Several more recent polls confirm that virtually half of all Americans consider abortion to be "murder." As sociologists James Davison Hunter and Carl Bowman rightly conclude, "The majority of Americans morally disapprove of the majority of abortions currently performed."

Yet while many Americans believe abortion is wrong, they also believe it should remain legal. The *Chicago Tribune* aptly summarized the situation in a September 1996 editorial: "Most Americans are uncomfortable with all-or-nothing policies on abortion. They generally shy away from proposals to ban it in virtually all circumstances, but neither are they inclined to make it available on demand no matter what the circumstances. They regard it, at best, as a necessary evil."

If Middle America—as Hunter calls the 60 percent in the ideological middle—sees abortion as an evil, why is it thought to be "necessary"? While the 1991 Gallup Poll did not probe this question specifically, it did make clear that it is *not* because Middle America sees abortion as necessary to secure equal opportunity for women. For example, less than 30 percent believe abortion is acceptable in the first three months of pregnancy if the pregnancy would require a teenager to drop out of school (and the number drops below 20 percent if the abortion takes place after three months). Likewise, less than 20 percent support abortion in the first three months of pregnancy if the pregnancy would interrupt a woman's career (and that support drops to 10 percent after three months).

Instead, many Americans may see abortion as "necessary" to preserve women's health—and this despite the fact that such a view is based on easily refuted misperceptions. In fact, during our unprecedented experiment in abortion-on-demand over the past three decades, the health of untold numbers of women has actually been damaged. This is thoroughly documented in a recent book by Elizabeth Ring-Cassidy and Ian Gentles, *Women's Health after Abortion: The Medical and Psychological Evidence* (2002). First, there is the direct harm of

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abortion to women—short term and long term. Women still die from legal abortion, and short-term harm may include infection and damaged reproductive organs. Long-term harm includes risk of infertility, psychological trauma, and increased risk of breast cancer (at the very least, from the delay of a first full-term pregnancy). In addition, there is the broader impact of indirect harm to women's health. Abortion directly and substantially fosters an attitude and a culture of sexual irresponsibility. The rise in sexually transmitted diseases, including pelvic inflammatory disease, and the rise in hospitalizations for ectopic pregnancies show the results.

Behind the slogans about women's freedom is the disaster of disordered lives. The social experiment with abortion has aggravated the very problems—like illegitimacy, child abuse, and domestic abuse—that it promised to solve. It has isolated women in their pregnancies and made them more vulnerable to violent abuse from uncommitted men. Can anyone say that legalized abortion has fulfilled its promise to reduce child abuse, or to reduce illegitimacy, or to reduce poverty?

Such misperceptions explain the seemingly contradictory polls showing that a majority of Americans believe that abortion should remain legal despite believing that it is murder. While the most committed pro-life Americans see legality and morality to be inextricably intertwined and thus view the polling data as contradictory, Middle America understands "legal" and "illegal" not in moral but in practical terms: Is criminalizing the procedure a realistic solution? It is commonly believed that prohibitions on abortion would not reduce abortion but would only push thousands of women into "the back alley" where many would be killed or injured, despite the evidence to the contrary. In 1957, for example, only 260 deaths could be traced to abortion. By 1972, the year before *Roe v. Wade*, only thirty-nine women died from illegal abortions, while twenty-seven died from legal ones. So much for the back alley.

Abortion advocates regularly do their best to spread such myths. For example, in 1995 when Congress first began to consider a bill prohibiting partial-birth abortion, abortion advocates bought a full-page advertisement in the *New York Times* showing a large coat hanger and the caption, "Will this be the only approved method of abortion?" Likewise, as Dr. Bernard Nathanson, a one-time pro-abortion leader, has written: "In NARAL we generally emphasized the drama of the individual case, not the mass statistics, but when we spoke of the latter it was always 'five thousand to ten thousand deaths a year.' I confess that I knew the figures were totally false, and I suppose that others did too if they stopped to think of it. But in the 'morality' of our revolution, it was a *useful* figure, widely accepted, so why go out of our way to correct it with honest statistics?"

While Middle Americans may view abortion as an evil, they view it as intractable. Likewise, they view fervent campaigns to prohibit abortion as unrealistic if not counterproductive, while they are drawn to realistic alternatives and regulations. They agree that there are too many abortions and would like to see them reduced. Abortion is not a galvanizing electoral issue for Americans because they don't believe that much can be done about the issue legally or politically. But they are wrong.

Given the state of public opinion and the fact that 75 percent of Americans believe that abortion is at least the taking of human life, if not murder itself, effectively changing public attitudes will require a shift of emphasis and resources to educating Americans about abortion's impact on women. The most direct and effective response to the myth of abortion as a "necessary evil" is to raise public consciousness concerning the damage abortion does to women. If Americans come to realize that abortion harms women as well as the unborn, it will not be seen as "necessary," and the "necessary evil" may be converted into evil pure and simple. In this way, we may lay the foundation for a dramatic shift in public opinion in the years ahead.

CLARKE D. FORSYTHE, *an attorney, is President of Americans United for Life.*

The Hemlock and the Cross

Peter J. Leithart

In early July 1759, three friends met at an inn called the Windmill outside the German city of Königsberg, for what might be called an "evangelistic" or "counseling" session. Intellectuals all, the three friends had earlier been cobelligerents in the cause of rationalism and the Enlightenment, but one had gone apostate. He had become a Christian of the most fervent and unenlightened sort, and his friends were intent on restoring him to the true fold, Enlightenment, and the good shepherd, Reason.

One of the two evangelists, Johann Christoph Berens, is long forgotten. The other was a thirty-five-year-old philosophy professor who had a few years earlier anonymously published a book on the *Natural Histo-*

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ry and Theory of the Heavens, pushing Newtonian science to the conclusion that all the operations of the world could be reduced to mechanical laws: "Give me matter and I will show you how a world should arise from it." So wrote the young, and dogmatically slumbering, Immanuel Kant.

The "apostate" was Johann Georg Hamann, until recently a promising Francophile rationalist. Hamann had translated the French economists, read Voltaire and Montesquieu, and defended the merchant classes against their detractors. His outlook changed during a trip to London in 1757, the precise purpose of which is still unknown. In London, Hamann had fallen into what he later described as an "irregular" way of life, been swindled out of his money, and apparently discovered that his London host was involved in a homosexual relationship. Shocked by this revelation, sick and desperate, he moved in with a respectable family in February 1759, closed himself in with his books, including a Bible, and began to read.

According to his later account, over the next few months Hamann read the Old Testament once, the New Testament twice, and then the whole Bible again. In the end, he said, "I forgot all my books in so doing; I was ashamed of ever having compared them with God's book, of ever having placed them on the same level with it, indeed of ever having preferred another book to it. I found the unity of the divine will in the redemption of Jesus Christ; I recognized my own crimes in the history of the Jewish people; I read the record of my own life, and thanked God for His forbearance with this His people, because nothing but such an example could entitle me to such a hope."

It was a conversion that turned Hamann into the man described by Isaiah Berlin as the century's "most passionate, consistent, extreme, and implacable enemy of the Enlightenment," a "pioneer of antirationalism in every sphere."

Despite the meeting at the Windmill and a second meeting a few weeks later, Hamann came through the debate unscarred and unmovable. In a letter written to Kant shortly after the meeting, he expressed his bemusement "at [Berens'] choice of a *philosopher* to try to change my mind," adding "I look upon the finest logical demonstration the way a sensible girl regards a love letter." The whole exchange permanently damaged Hamann's relations with his erstwhile patron Berens, who allegedly threatened violence, but Hamann continued corresponding with Kant for years afterward. Not long after, Kant proposed that the two collaborate on a children's physics textbook (!), and some years later Kant helped Hamann, frequently unemployed, to obtain a job. Hamann, for his part, wrote an eccentric response to Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* whose trenchant insight into the problems of Kantianism has only recently begun to be recognized.

At their initial meeting, Kant had suggested that Hamann should translate some articles from the French *Encyclopedia* as a kind of therapy. Instead, Hamann wrote the letter to Kant that was to become one of the most famous letters in German intellectual history, and followed with a published response entitled *Socratic Memorabilia*, dedicated to "the two." (For what it was worth, "the two" were not impressed, and Hamann suspected that they were behind an attack review published in a Hamburg journal.)

In part, the treatise continued the highly dramatized self-defense begun in Hamann's letter to Kant. Placing himself in the position of Socrates, he implicitly positioned Kant and Berens as enforcers of orthodoxy, or, worse, as shrewish Xanthippes. A servant of the truth, Hamann knew that he could expect nothing better than "hunger and thirst . . . the gallows and the wheel." More broadly, the *Socratic Memorabilia* was Hamann's effort to turn one of the Enlightenment's own idols—indeed, the patron saint of the eighteenth century—against the Enlightenment. Some, such as Joseph Priestly, who wrote a treatise on *Socrates and Jesus Compared*, insisted on the superiority of Jesus. For many, however, Socrates was a weapon to be used against Christianity; like the philosophes themselves, Socrates was a free inquirer standing courageously before, and ultimately crushed beneath, the entrenched forces of intolerance, superstition, and ignorance. This time around, the philosophes hoped, things would turn out differently.

Hamann was as devoted to Socrates as his friends, but his account of Socrates' life and teaching was very different. For starters, Hamann recognized that Socrates' philosophical "method" was not that of modern rationalists. Socrates did not intend to offer irrefutable logical demonstrations. Rather, "analogy constituted the soul of his reasoning, and he gave it irony for a body"; later in the treatise Hamann added that Socrates "preferred a mocking and humorous exhibition to a serious investigation." Critics complained of Socrates' "allusions, and censured the similes of his oral discourse at one time as being too far-fetched and at another time as vulgar," but such criticisms were wrongheaded.

Hamann discerned a similarity between Socrates' "poetic" mode of investigation and the parabolic shape of Christian revelation, for, as he wrote elsewhere, "the Scriptures cannot speak with us as human beings otherwise than in parables because all our knowledge is sensory, figurative." In this introductory comment on Socratic method, Hamann already indicates that he is prepared to view Socrates, as he viewed everything else, Christocentrically. While presenting this theological

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perspective, Hamann's aim was to write "about Socrates in a Socratic manner," that is, with irony, allusion, humor, and, above all, through indirection. His success is indicated by one striking fact: Hamann wrote a treatise presenting a Christological view of Socrates without ever once naming Christ.

In contrast to the hubris of modern systematizers who want to get the heavens into their heads, Socrates surpassed all other Greeks in wisdom because "he had advanced further in self-knowledge than they, and knew that he knew nothing." In Socrates' profession of ignorance, Hamann detected a hint of Paul's later statement that "if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he does not yet know as he ought to know" (1 Corinthians 8:2-3). Socrates was an ancient evangelist who urged Athenians to turn "away from the idol-altars of their pious and politically shrewd priests to the worship of an unknown God." Socrates' "impetuosity" in debate with sophists and priests "compelled him to pull out his hair sometimes in the marketplace and to act as if beside himself." That "beside himself" echoes the charge made against Jesus, but Hamann makes the analogy more explicit by adding, "Was not the teacher of mankind, gentle and lowly in heart, forced to utter one denunciation after the other of the scribes and pious ones among his people?" If anyone would deny Socrates a place among the prophets, he "must be asked who the Father of Prophets is and whether our God has not called Himself and shown Himself to be a God of the Gentiles."

Hamann finds a foreshadowing of Christ in Socrates' notorious ugliness. Greeks, like the Jews of Jesus' day, were "offended that the fairest of the sons of men was promised to them as a redeemer, and that a man of sorrows, full of wounds and stripes, should be the hero of their expectations." Even the Spirit is evident in the life of Socrates. In an oblique reference to the Spirit's role in the conception of Jesus, Hamann compares the spirit or genius that inspired Socrates to the "wind" that allowed "the womb of a pure virgin" to become fruitful.

Most of all, Socrates' relentless pursuit of truth and irritating habit of pointing out the ignorance of others led to his death, and in this he foreshadowed the life and death of Jesus. And this made it perfectly obvious that when God became man he "would not escape from the world as well as a Socrates, but would die a more ignominious and cruel death" even than Saint Louis, "the most Christian king." Accepting the hemlock rather than submitting to exile, Socrates proved that he shared both the mission and the "final destiny of the prophets and the righteous." Far from being an eighteenth-century rationalist, Hamann argued, Socrates was virtually a Christian believer, a prophet, even a type of Christ.

In this, Hamann was following an ancient tradition in the Church. Already in the second century, Justin the Martyr was struck by the similarities between Socrates and Jesus. When the world was full of demonic myths, "Socrates endeavored, by true reason and examination, to bring these things to light," only to be condemned "as an atheist and a profane person." To be sure, Justin notes many differences between Jesus and Socrates. While Socrates died for exhorting men to become acquainted with the unknown God, "no one trusted in Socrates so as to die for this doctrine." While Socrates taught philosophers and scholars, Christ's philosophy is known among "artisans and people entirely uneducated." Despite these differences, Justin argued that the same Logos that was at work in Socrates took flesh in Jesus, who also condemned the demons and met with the same fate. This meant for Justin that Socrates was a pagan foreshadowing of Jesus. Long before the Logos became incarnate, it was clear from the experience of Socrates and others that the demons would not put up with anyone devoted to "a reasonable and earnest life."

For the Church fathers and Hamann, this typological understanding of Socrates was of a piece with a biblically centered philosophy of history. At his own conversion, Hamann discovered that the Bible was telling the story of his life, and he believed that this principle could be universalized not only to every individual soul but to the history of man. Thus, he could write of Peter the Great's building projects by comparison to "Noah or the Galilean . . . [who] became a carpenter in order to be the god of his people." Berlin puts the point well: for Hamann, "the Bible was a great universal allegory, a similitude of that which was occurring everywhere and at every instant."

Christianity's relation to the classical culture in which it first took root is a perennial problem. To what extent can the classical heritage be embraced, and to what extent must it be simply challenged and rejected? Certain parameters of the answer are self-evident. Tertullian dismissed Athens with what he thought was a rhetorical question: "What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?" But if there is no relation at all, how can Christ be a universal savior and the gospel a universal message? On the other hand, the efforts of ancient Christians to canonize Socrates are profoundly disturbing. But between rejection and canonization there is, shall we say, plenty of room for experiment.

Hamann's formulation of this project may be overly obscure at times, yet in several respects he offers a pathway, and an illuminating one. He knew that if Jesus is truly the center of history, the one in whom all things hold together, then the question of Socrates and Jesus was unavoidable. He understood that if Athens has nothing to do with Jerusalem, then the story of

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Jerusalem is just one story among others, rather than the master story of man. He followed the patristic writers in recognizing that a typological reading of Scripture provided a map of history that could be applied beyond the biblical history itself. And he realized that the cross can stretch out to overshadow the four corners of the universe only if it encompasses the hemlock, and that the cross is properly honored only if the story of the hemlock is seen as an episode in the story of the cross.

Peter J. Leithart *teaches theology and literature at New St. Andrews College in Moscow, Idaho.*

Campania

The Arts that sensuously address
The raising of the consciousness
Bloom in a spread of themes and tones
—Geology of various zones

Some scale the great volcano—sky,
Flame, precipice, immensity.
While some tread, in the charming vale,
The villages-and-vineyards trail.

The grandeur group (though kindly) tends
To mock at its more modest friends,
While they, in turn, are quick to spot
Pretension in the peak-proud lot.

But both despise one who resigns
The glorious vistas, the green vines
For Phlegrean Fields that gall each sense
With flat glooms round mephytic vents,

A matter of tastes and temperaments.

Robert Conquest

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The Persistence of the Catholic Moment

Richard John Neuhaus

In 1987, while I was still a Lutheran, I published a book titled *The Catholic Moment: The Paradox of the Church in the Postmodern World.* There I argued that the Catholic Church is the leading and indispensable community in advancing the Christian movement in world history. In evangelization, in furthering the Christian intellectual tradition, in the quest for Christian unity, in advocating the culture of life, and in every other aspect of the Christian mission, this was, I contended, the Catholic Moment. I am frequently asked whether I still believe that, or whether the Moment has been missed, or derailed, or simply delayed. The short answer is: if the Catholic Church is what she claims to be—and about that I have no doubt—then every moment from Pentecost to Our Lord's return in glory is the Catholic Moment. But the degree to which that Moment is realized in the little span of time that is ours depends on whether contemporary Catholicism has the nerve to be fully and distinctively Catholic.

To be Catholic is not a private preference but a matter of ordering one's loves and loyalties to the very public communal reality that is the Catholic Church. For others, religion may be what a person does with his solitude, or what people do together with their solitudes, but Catholicism is a corporate reality. It is what Catholics used to call a "perfect society" within the imperfect societies of the world, or what Vatican II, with essentially the same intention, calls the People of God. It understands itself to be an apostolically constituted community, and its distinguishing mark is communion with the Bishop of Rome who, alone of religious leaders in the world—and this is a matter of the greatest symbolic and practical significance—is not a citizen or subject of any temporal sovereignty.

RICHARD JOHN NEUHAUS *is Editor-in-Chief of* FIRST THINGS. *This essay is adapted from the annual John XXIII Lecture at the Catholic University of America School of Law.*

It is suggested by some that the public influence of Catholicism has been greatly weakened, not least by the scandals of the past year. The question of Catholicism in the public square, however, is not—at least not chiefly—the question of Catholic influence in social change or public policy, never mind electoral politics. Catholicism in the public square is a matter of being, fully and vibrantly, the public community that is the Catholic Church. More than by recent scandals, Catholicism in the public square is weakened by its gradual but certain sociological accommodation to a Protestant ethos—also in its secularized forms—that construes religion in terms of consumer preference and voluntary associations in support of those preferences. It is weakened also by what is aptly called the totalitarian impulse of the modern state—including democratic states—to monopolize public space and consign religion to the private sphere, thus producing what I have called the naked public square.

The second dynamic is evident on several fronts, and is now at crisis level in Catholic education, especially higher education, and in health care. At issue is the freedom of the Church to govern herself. It is not enough that there be a flourishing network of voluntary associations called Catholic parishes confined to doing religious things on Sunday morning and other appointed times. That is not what the Second Vatican Council meant by the apostolically constituted public society called the People of God. The great Catholic battle of the modern era has been for *libertas ecclesiae*—the liberty of the Church to govern herself. In America today, for reasons both internal and external to the life of the Church, that battle is being lost on some fronts.

In many ways, Catholicism in America is flourishing. It is far and away the fastest growing religious community in the country, with almost 200,000 adult converts per year, and patterns of immigration and youthful adherence that will likely expand its numbers far

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beyond the present sixty-three million. Contrary to the fears of some, and the hopes of others, there is no evidence that the events of the past year will impede this growth. In this country and worldwide, the two most vibrant and growing sectors of the two billion-plus Christian movement are Catholicism and evangelical/pentecostal Protestantism. John Paul II speaks of the new millennium as a "springtime of evangelization," and there is reason to believe that is much more than wishful thinking. In this country and elsewhere, we witness the beginnings of historic convergences between Catholics and evangelicals. Such cultural and moral convergences are not without political consequences, but more important are the spiritual and theological convergences that could reshape the Christian reality in the century ahead. (In this connection, I warmly recommend a careful reading of Philip Jenkins' recent book, *The Next Christendom.*) So Catholicism is flourishing. The question is, with specific reference to America, how and in what ways will Catholicism be vibrantly, or even recognizably, Catholic?

Three years ago, marking the seventy-fifth anniversary of *Commonweal* magazine, its former editor Peter Steinfels wrote an article that is, I believe, both wise and courageous, "Reinventing Liberal Catholicism: Between Powerful Enemies and Dubious Allies." Since the dawn of modernity, said Steinfels, liberal Catholicism has been marked by several characteristics: a devotion to *libertas ecclesiae*; an eagerness to critically engage the culture; an understanding that the Church is in history and therefore necessarily involved in change and development; a devotion to unfettered intellectual inquiry; a recognition of the integrity and autonomy of distinct spheres of human activity; and an interest in reforming the structures of the Church in support of her apostolic mission through time. Heroes of this liberal Catholicism, according to Steinfels, are such as John Henry Newman and Jacques Maritain. If this depiction of liberal Catholicism is accurate, we should all want to call ourselves liberal Catholics. Which is another way of saying that, although Mr. Steinfels and others may have problems with this, we should be John Paul II Catholics.

Liberal Catholics, says Steinfels, have been riding high since the Council; they have largely defined what is meant by the "post-Vatican II Church." But now they are facing the "powerful enemies" mentioned in his subtitle, and, in this pontificate, liberal Catholics are viewed as suspect by Rome. "The most obvious and fundamental working difference between these [enemy] groups and liberal Catholics," he writes, "turns on the possibility that the pope, despite the guidance of the Holy Spirit, might be subject to tragic error. Liberal Catholics believe that this possibility, which all Catholics recognize as historical fact, did not conveniently disappear at some point in the distant past, like 1950, but was probably the case in the 1968 issuance of *Humanae Vitae* and cannot be ruled out in the refusal of ordination to women."

To which this liberal Catholic (as defined above) responds that of course this pope can and has made mistakes. But what is now called liberal Catholicism is besieged and suspect because of its refusal to honestly receive the teachings of Vatican II as authoritatively interpreted by the Magisterium, and not least by the pontificate of John Paul II. Liberal Catholics joined with what Steinfels calls their "dubious allies" on the left in claiming that Vatican II called for a revolution, and they acted accordingly. It is now obvious that it was a revolution that was not to be. The now failing revolution predictably provoked reactions of retrenchment, resulting in the toxic discontents of both right and left in American Catholicism. What has not been received, what has not been embraced, what has not been internalized, what has not been tried is the bold proposal of renewal and reform advanced by John Paul II. Although the future of the proposal is uncertain, those bishops who have in recent months been calling for a plenary council in the United States to solemnly receive the Second Vatican Council and its authoritative interpretation are, it seems to me, exactly right. The way forward is the way of the Council that was and is. Thirty-seven years is enough, and more than enough, of bitter contention over the imagined Vatican II of leftist enthusiasms and rightist fears.

For decades, the Catholic left has called for a Vatican Council III to "complete" the work of Vatican II. Others on the left, such as Garry Wills, dissent from that call, claiming that Vatican II put the teaching magisterium out of business once and for all, "diffusing" ecclesial authority throughout the Spirit-guided private opinions of the People of God. This move is implausibly presented as what is meant by the *sensus fidelium.* The burden of Steinfels' argument is that liberal Catholicism made a great mistake since the Council in not distinguishing itself and, when necessary, separating itself, from its "dubious allies" of the Catholic left. Turning from its intellectual and theological tasks, liberalism got bogged down in the canonical litany of leftist complaints about contraception, homosexuality, women's ordination, and clerical celibacy, along with endless agitations aimed at "power sharing" in church government—and all of these linked to the larger question of papal teaching authority. Moreover, sectors of the Catholic left became increasingly part of a political and cultural left that is increasingly secularist and post-Christian, and even explicitly anti-Christian. Liberal Catholics, says Steinfels, should have made it clear that, in very impor-

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tant respects, these dubious allies of the Catholic left were not allies at all.

The association with the Catholic left created, he wrote, a crisis of irony, a crisis of intellect, and a crisis of inclusiveness. The absence of irony and historical perspective led to fanaticism and a sectarian spirit. The refusal to make serious arguments nurtured anti-intellectualism and an emphasis on an ever-expanding inclusiveness which emphatically excluded those not of like mind and resulted in a loss of Catholic identity. The Catholic left, he says, has no patience with liberalism's devotion to "compromise, incrementalism, or extended analysis and debate." "The Catholic left," he writes, "is an offspring of liberal Catholicism, but is rooted in the dramatic appeals and confrontations of the 1960s" rather than the liberal, and mainly European, tradition of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. But so smugly triumphalistic were liberals following the Council, while at the same time—and somewhat contradictorily—so fearful of their "powerful enemies" on the right, that few were, and few are, prepared to challenge the dubious alliance with the Catholic left. The old maxim applied: the enemy of my enemies . . .

Steinfels' point about Catholic identity is of particular importance. One has waited for a long time for a persuasive answer to the question of why, if the canonical litany of left-liberal demands were met, Catholicism would not be very much like oldline liberal Protestantism. Perhaps like the Episcopal Church, except very much bigger and with shabbier liturgical practices. The Catholic left has little interest in, or capacity for, addressing the question of what makes Catholicism distinctively Catholic, and liberal Catholics have not called them to account on that score. With respect to Catholic identity, Steinfels writes, the attitude on the left takes the form of the question, "Isn't [the question of what is authentically Catholic], after all, a task we can leave to church authorities, whom we will then feel free to criticize?"

There is among cradle Catholics of a left-liberal bent—and perhaps this is more evident to those who come into the Church later in life—an astonishing insouciance about the solidity and perdurance of Catholicism. Catholic identity, what makes Catholicism Catholic, is a question that will take care of itself or is somebody else's worry. It is not our job, they seem to be saying, to maintain the ecclesiastical playground in which we pursue our deconstructive games. This apparent insouciance may be a form of unshakable faith in the promise that the gates of hell shall not prevail. But I think not. Rather, it seems to me, this insouciance—or to call it by another name, this recklessness—reflects an ecclesiastical fundamentalism that is akin to the Bible fundamentalism of some other Christians. It is indifferent to the incarnational reality of a Church subject to the trials, testings, distortions, inspirations, and mistakes of history. I do believe that the gates of hell shall not prevail against the Church, but the ravages of the reckless confidence that no serious harm is done by unbounded criticism, conflict, and contradiction should not be ignored. There is the harm of souls misled—and possibly lost—of intellectual and artistic traditions trashed, and of innumerable persons denied the high adventure of Catholic fidelity.

I recently had occasion to reread Jacques Maritain's *The Peasant of the Garonne*, a book written in the months immediately following the conclusion of Vatican II in December 1965. Critics at the time called it a cranky book of disillusioned hopes, and there is truth in that; but it is also a stunningly prescient book that recognized what might be termed the hijacking of liberal Catholicism and its long-term consequences. As a liberal, Maritain had no illusions about what came to be called the "the pre-Vatican II church." He knows about the anti-intellectualism, the suspicion of scholarship and science, and the stifling juridicalism of disciplinary measures. "All this," he writes, "was going to build up, in the unconscious of a great many Christians, clerics and laymen, an enormous weight of frustration, disillusionment, repressed doubts, resentment, bitterness, healthy desires sacrificed, with all the anxieties and pent-up aspirations of the unhappy conscience. Comes the *aggiornamento*. Why be astonished that at the very announcement of a Council, then in the surrounding of it, and now after it, the enormous unconscious weight which I have just mentioned burst into the open in a kind of explosion that does no honor to the human intelligence?" The explosive reaction to the earlier repression, says Maritain, resulted in interpretations of the Council marked by a "kneeling to the world." He leaves no doubt that he believes these interpretations are, in fact, misinterpretations—sometimes innocent, sometimes deliberate. As for the Council itself, it "appears as an island guarded by the Spirit of God in the middle of a stormy ocean that is overturning everything, the true and the false."

The storm and its aftermath were powerfully evident a few years later in events surrounding *Humanae Vitae*, the 1968 encyclical on human sexuality. That moment marks, among other things, the point at which bishops largely—albeit in most cases inadvertently—surrendered their role as teachers. An orchestrated campaign of theologians and other academics publicly rejected a solemn magisterial pronouncement on faith and morals, and the world held its breath to see what would happen. A few bishops tried to impose discipline, but they were not supported by Rome, and the result was that nothing happened. Except that it was now established in the minds of many that the Church pretends to

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teach with authority, but bishops, theologians, priests, and the faithful are free to ignore what is taught.

Humanae Vitae, it is important to underscore, does not stand alone. The teaching that the conjugal act of love should be open to new life and not be negated by contraceptive means is deeply rooted in centuries of tradition. *Humanae Vitae* reaffirmed that tradition, as did Pius XI when it was first thrown into question in 1930, and as has every pontificate since then. There is, I would suggest, no new argument that has not been addressed in papal teaching. It is true but entirely beside the point that most Catholics do not adhere to the teaching; most Catholics have never had the teaching explained to them in a manner that invites their assent. It is simply not plausible that liberal Catholics such as Newman and Maritain would not affirm that this teaching of the Church is binding upon the Catholic conscience.

Critiques of liberal Catholicism—where it went wrong and how it might be set right—such as that offered by Peter Steinfels are to be warmly welcomed. The concern for Catholic identity is on the mark, but I suggest that no identity is recognizably Catholic if it skirts the question of obedience. Here, too, we need the intellectual honesty and civil discussion for which Steinfels calls. We need to revive what Newman called "the grammar of assent" in recognizing that, on controverted questions such as artificial contraception and the Church's inability to ordain women, the Church calls for the obedience of external and internal assent. I know that intellectual obedience is a scandalous idea in our time. And not only in our time, for it has been a stumbling block to many over the centuries. What is sometimes called "ecclesial faith," as distinct from "divine faith" or "religious submission," is an inseparable part of what it means to be Catholic, of what it means for our loves and allegiances to be rightly ordered. Contrary to modern doctrines of autonomy, there is nothing demeaning about obedience. The word is from the Latin *ob-audire* and means "to give ear to, to listen to, to follow guidance."

Accepting full intellectual and moral responsibility for his decision, the Catholic decides who to listen to, who to follow, and, come the crunch, to whom to submit. The Catholic believes that, in the apostolically constituted community of faith, the Bishop of Rome is Peter among us. The Catholic believes that the words of Jesus, "He who hears you hears me," have abiding historical applicability until the end of time. The bishops teaching "with and under" Peter can teach infallibly. Infallibility means that the fullness of apostolic authority will never be invoked to require us to believe anything that is false. The relationship between freedom and faith is set forth in Vatican II's *Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*:

> It is only in freedom, however, that human beings can turn to what is good, and our contemporaries are right in highly praising and assiduously pursuing such freedom, although often they do so in wrong ways as if it gave a license to do anything one pleases, even evil. Genuine freedom is an outstanding sign of the divine image in human beings. . . . Human dignity demands that the individual act according to a knowing and free choice, as motivated and prompted personally from within, and not through blind internal impulse or merely external pressure.

I may not understand an authoritative teaching of the Magisterium, I may have difficulties with a teaching, but, as Newman understood, a thousand difficulties do not add up to a doubt, never mind a rejection. I may think a teaching is inadequately expressed, and pray and work for its more adequate expression in the future. But, given a decision between what I think the Church should teach and what the Church in fact does teach, I decide for the Church. I decide freely and rationally—because God has promised the apostolic leadership of the Church guidance and charisms that He has not promised me; because I think the Magisterium just may understand some things that I don't; because I know for sure that, in the larger picture of history, the witness of the Catholic Church is immeasurably more important than anything I might think or say. In short, I obey. The nuances of such obedience, of what is meant by "thinking with the Church" (*sentire cum ecclesia*), are admirably spelled out in the 1990 instruction of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, "The Ecclesial Vocation of the Theologian." It is an instruction that can be read with enormous benefit also by those who are not professional theologians. My point is this: liberal Catholicism cannot be reinvented, it cannot be rehabilitated, it will not be vibrantly Catholic, until it candidly and convincingly comes to terms with obedience.

The great question, a question that has ramifications that go far beyond assent to Catholic teaching, is the relationship between freedom and obedience—or, more precisely, between freedom and truth. The question includes ecclesial obedience to the truth, as Catholics believe the truth is made known. We are bound by the truth, and when we are bound by the truth, we are bound to be free. The relationship between truth and freedom is as true for non-Catholics or, indeed, for non-Christians as it is true for Catholics, as is magnificently argued by John Paul II in *Veritatis Splendor* (The Splendor of Truth). What went wrong with aspects of liberal Catholicism has its roots in what

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went wrong long before the 1960s. What went wrong was the submission to an Enlightenment or rationalist tradition—found also in a romanticism that too often mirrored what it intended to counter—of the autonomous self. Still today there is a liberal Catholic reflex, shared by secular liberalism, against the very ideas of authority, obedience, and the truth that binds. The Catholic insight about human freedom, an insight that we dare to say has universal applicability, is that we are bound to be free. The truth, in order to be understood, must be loved, and love binds. And so also with the apostolic community that embodies and articulates the truth.

Coming to terms with the question of obedience means coming to terms with the one who said, "If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." The modern regime of secular liberalism adopted the slogan "The truth will make you free," but pitted it against the one who is the truth. More radically, it pitted truth and freedom against any authoritative statement of truth, and against authority itself. The liberal ideal was that of the autonomous, untethered, unencumbered self. The consequence of that impossible ideal is conformism to the delusion of autonomy or, as the history of the last century so tragically demonstrates, blind submission to totalitarian doctrines that present themselves as surrogates for the truth that makes us free.

The "dubious ally" that has done in liberal Catholicism again and again is the conceptual regime of secular liberalism, and its misconstrual of the connection between freedom and truth. The result is liberal Catholics who insist that they belong—"Once a Catholic, always a Catholic"—but it is a belonging without being bound. Let it be admitted that this is true of all of us—in different ways, and to a greater or lesser extent. There is perhaps no greater obstacle to our entering upon the high adventure of Catholic fidelity than modernity's perverse idea of freedom, an idea that we breathe with the cultural air that surrounds us. And there is important truth in the maxim "Once a Catholic, always a Catholic." The baptism by which we are indelibly marked is an abiding bond, and a magnetic force drawing us always toward the completeness of the conversion to which we are called. That conversion is perfected in obedience to the truth that freedom is discovered in obedience to the truth. For the Catholic, such obedience can in no way be separated from the community that St. Paul describes as "the household of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and bulwark of the truth" (1 Timothy 3:15).

And so I end where I began. The question is whether Catholicism will be Catholic. The historical and sociological dynamics to which I alluded earlier have led to a serious unraveling, an unraveling gleefully celebrated and encouraged by the Catholic left. Liberal Catholicism, rightly understood, is an honorable tradition and could today be a source of renewal, but that depends upon its capacity and readiness to receive the invitation—an invitation so powerfully and persistently issued by this pontificate—to enter upon the high adventure of fidelity to the truth.

At the end of his aforementioned essay, Peter Steinfels lists five developments the Church must address in the new millennium: human sexuality, technological control over genes and minds, relations among world religions, changes in historical consciousness and cultural pluralism, and the meaning of individual freedom and democracy. Through encyclicals and other teaching documents, John Paul II has for twenty-four years, in obedience to the spirit and the letter of Vatican II, addressed each of those questions comprehensively, repeatedly, with formidable intelligence and persuasive force. But, with notable exceptions, his witness has not been received. Not by bishops, not by priests, not by catechists, not by traditionalists who think Vatican II was a mistake, and not by liberal Catholics who incessantly pit Vatican II against the living magisterium of the Church.

We very much need bishops who are teachers of the fullness of the faith. Perhaps God has given us the bishops we have in order to test our faith, but we know that the purpose of the episcopal office is not limited to providing spiritual trials, as salutary as spiritual trials may be. Above all, and this applies to all, we need a conversion to *ob-audire*—to responsive listening, to lively engagement, to trustful following, to the form of reflective faith that is obedience. The word went forth from the Second Vatican Council, and I believe in the promise of Isaiah 55 that "the word shall not return void." After more than three decades of confusion, contention, and conflicts that have long since become a bore to serious people, we are perhaps on the edge of genuinely receiving the Council and the living magisterium of which the Council is part; the living magisterium apart from which there would be no Council, apart from which the Council cannot be rightly understood. If so, the Catholicism that is flourishing now and will likely flourish in the future will be believably and vibrantly Catholic. If so, the consequences for the Christian movement in world history are inestimable. I believe this could happen. In fact, were I writing a book about this promise and possibility, I might very well borrow a title from myself and call it *The Catholic Moment.* FT

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Christians as Patriots

Peter C. Meilaender

There is always a danger of intense love destroying what I might call the "polyphony" of life. What I mean is that God requires that we should love him eternally with our whole hearts, yet not so as to compromise or diminish our earthly affections, but as a kind of cantus firmus *to which the other melodies of life provide the counterpoint. Earthly affection is one of these contrapuntal themes, a theme which enjoys an autonomy of its own. . . . Where the ground bass is firm and clear, there is nothing to stop the counterpoint from being developed to the utmost of its limits.*

— Dietrich Bonhoeffer
Letters and Papers from Prison

Following the terrorist attacks of September 11, patriotism, for the first time in a long time, became fashionable in America once again. This should prompt reflection among Christians, for the world has always doubted whether Christians—who, after all, like to sing such hymns as "I'm but a stranger here, heav'n is my home"—can really share the love of country felt by other citizens. Even as reliable a commentator as Walter Berns, in his recent book *Making Patriots*, attributes something of this doubt to the American Founders themselves, who, though not hostile to religion, deliberately set up a system in which "we are first of all citizens, and only secondarily Christians, Jews, Muslims, or of any other religious persuasion." If many Christians, Jews, and Muslims are likely to disagree with Berns on this point, that only serves to emphasize the dilemma. Nor is the dilemma merely theoretical, for it is a hard fact of political life that the state needs citizens who feel at least some love for their country. Periods of crisis like the present remind us, often tragically, that our security and freedom ultimately rest upon the willingness of citizens to fight and possibly to die for their country should the need arise. It is therefore of some importance to consider why we, as citizens, might come to feel the love of country that the state so urgently requires.

For if it is clear that the state requires it, it is less obvious that we can be expected to feel it. Indeed, the problem of how to inspire love of country has been one of the enduring questions of political thought. Plato emphasized this difficulty in the *Republic*, where Socrates proposes that the only way to ensure the loyalty of citizens is to tell them what he calls a "noble lie": that they have all been born from the earth and are thus, in a literal sense, blood relatives not only of each other, but also of the very land they inhabit. The city can rest secure in the love of its members, Socrates suggests, only by pretending that it is as natural as the family, that fellow citizens are as intimately related as brothers and sisters, and that the land itself is their common mother.

This difficulty is even more pronounced in the theory of liberalism that forms the basis for our own political system. Plato, after all, described a Greek city-state that actively sought to mold virtuous citizens and to sustain the good life for human beings. Such a city, aiming to provide goods nobler than mere self-preservation, could plausibly ask citizens to die on its behalf. But liberalism abandons such grand political pretensions and settles for a state that merely protects the individual rights of fundamentally self-interested people. This is evident in the standard liberal model of the social contract. On this model, government arises from the voluntary agreement of individuals to submit to a common authority. They are willing to do so because government helps protect the things about which they care most—their lives, their liberty, their property. But if I think of political society in these terms, as simply a useful means for protecting my private, personal inter-

Peter C. Meilaender *is Assistant Professor of Political Science at Houghton College in New York State.*

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ests, what could possibly motivate me to fight, and perhaps die, for my country? Why would I stand fast on the front lines in the face of enemy fire? It is hard to know why a person whose driving motivation is the desire to preserve his life, liberty, and property would ever want to make a deal that might require his death. After all, if you join the state only to preserve your life, then a state that asks you to die for it is a pretty bad bargain.

Love of country has proved a special problem not only for liberals, but also for Christians. Roman Catholics in particular have frequently been viewed as unreliable and potentially subversive subjects because of their loyalty to Rome. Such suspicion of Catholics has continued even as a quite recent phenomenon. Many will remember, for example, John F. Kennedy's famous speech before the Greater Houston Ministerial Association in 1960, promising that if elected he would not take orders from the Vatican. Much earlier, the philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau, anxious that citizens should be united and share a single will, criticized Catholicism for giving them "two legislative orders, two rulers, two homelands, and put[ting] them under two contradictory obligations." Even Locke, arguing for religious toleration, conceded that not every group could be tolerated: "That Church can have no right to be tolerated by the Magistrate, which is constituted upon such a bottom that all those who enter into it do thereby, ipso facto, deliver themselves up to the Protection and Service of another Prince"—an exception aimed, presumably, at Catholics loyal to the Pope.

But the blunt, and to modern ears questionable, charge of allegiance to a foreign prince has not been the deepest source of skepticism about Christians' political loyalty. When Rousseau makes his jab at Catholicism, he is only noting a particularly egregious example of what he regards as a more general problem: that traditional Christian belief has *always* given people "two homelands." For Christianity directs our hearts and minds toward the promised land beyond the grave and commands us to strive for the rewards of eternal rather than temporal life. In Rousseau's words, "The Christian's homeland is not of this world." Nor is it only the enemies of the faith, like Rousseau, who attest to this difficulty. St. Augustine famously declared that Christians' primary loyalty is not to the cities of this life, but rather to the City of God, which, in his words, "calls out citizens from all nations and so collects a society of aliens"—aliens, that is, in our own sense of those who are not citizens and whose loyalties are therefore likely to be divided. Similarly, in one of his favorite metaphors, Augustine describes the City of God as passing through this world "like a pilgrim in a foreign land" and our life on earth as "the time of our pilgrimage, in exile from the Lord."

Fostering love of country, then, has always been recognized as a problem, and it has posed special difficulties, in different ways, for liberals and Christians. Since most of those reading this are likely to be Christian liberals of one stripe or another, this is a matter worthy of further consideration. Must the state simply accept that we cannot, in the end, be counted upon? Assuming that we cannot really pull off a version of Plato's noble lie, even if we wanted to, should citizens simply conclude that the best thing to do in a pinch is cut and run? Or is there some way that we—even we Christian citizens of a liberal state—can justify loving our country in the way it seems to require?

There are, I think, two basic reasons why people are likely to love their country. The distinction between the two is suggested nicely by the words of a love song from the old Rodgers and Hammerstein musical *Cinderella*. The song asks the question, "Do I love you because you're beautiful, or are you beautiful because I love you?" Anyone who has been in love will immediately recognize the difficulty of answering that question. We might love someone because of certain good qualities that person possesses—beauty, for example, or virtue. We might, however, attribute those good qualities to our beloved precisely because we are already, for some other reason, in love. Anyone who has ever wondered about a smitten friend, "What could she possibly see in him?," will recognize the problem. For the truth is that love, though not, as some claim, blind, does see with eyes of its own.

So also with love of country. We might think our country just, or noble, or a shining city upon a hill, and love it on account of its good qualities. On the other hand, we might be more inclined to attribute justice or nobility to our country, precisely because we already love it for some other reason. But why would we love it, if not for its good qualities?

The answer, I think, is not hard to find. Most of us, I suspect, love our country for the very simple reason that it happens to be our home. The love of home is surely among the most common and universal human feelings. So many memories are bound up with one's native land; so many friends and neighbors inhabit its familiar places; well-known and fondly remembered sights and sounds, even the very smells, can arouse deep inner longings and stir our hearts.

Recently I had occasion for the first time in several years to drive through the part of northeastern Ohio, near Cleveland, where I grew up. As we drove through the city and I caught glimpses of old familiar sights, I could feel the excitement growing within me, and it was with great pleasure that I pointed out to my four-year-old son the Terminal Tower, the best-known landmark in Cleveland's skyline. In a certain sense—as my wife

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insisted on pointing out—this was mildly ludicrous, because the small town where I grew up is actually about thirty miles west of Cleveland, and I probably wasn't in the city itself more than a few times a year, usually for an Indians game. But that only serves to illustrate my point: even though Cleveland itself had not been my home, it was close enough and bound up with enough memories, like going to ballgames with my father, that just driving through the city and seeing its skyline could warm my heart. The familiar sights of home can do that. And this emotion goes far toward explaining why most people love their native land. Most of us, most of the time, probably love our country less because it is good than simply because it is ours.

Is either of these two possible motives for loving our country—that it is good, or that it is ours—preferable, or even defensible? Given this choice, we are likely, I think, to be drawn toward the first option: loving our country because it is good. The second—loving it merely because it happens to be ours—seems almost irrational, less a reason than an emotion, little more, indeed, than a prejudice. A common prejudice, no doubt, but a prejudice hardly becomes more justifiable simply by being widely shared. The first motivation, by contrast, appears to be not only a reason, but a good reason, perhaps even the best one imaginable. Presumably our country is worthy of our love precisely to the extent that it is good—to the extent that it is just, free, humane, generous. And how could we continue to love a country that we knew lacked these qualities? Surely we would not recommend loyalty to a state we considered unjust. Christians, especially, may be drawn to this point of view. We are commanded to love one another and to serve our neighbors, and we have been granted some insight into what a truly just city would be like. Should we not love the actual earthly countries in which we live when they strive to pattern themselves on the model of that Heavenly City and reject them when they do not?

But loyalty based upon a country's goodness or justice is potentially a very dangerous thing. Indeed, Christians are particularly well-positioned to see this, for they understand that our earthly polities are, in truth, never fully just. As Augustine pointed out long ago, "true justice is found only in that commonwealth whose founder and ruler is Christ"—the City of God, and not in any of our earthly cities. Those who consider their country worthy of their love only if it is good are doomed to perpetual disappointment.

Disappointment, however, is not the worst effect of such dashed hopes. The frustration of those who, dissatisfied with the shortcomings of political life, wish to make it measure up to some ideal standard of justice, religious or secular, can be a lethal phenomenon. Edmund Burke saw the results of this frustration already in the French Revolution, but we have numerous more recent examples of those who, unwilling to love a country stained by imperfection, chose, regardless of the cost, to substitute some preferred vision of their own for the country they actually inhabited. Their names provide a roll call of the twentieth century's greatest atrocities: Hitler, Stalin, Mao, Pol Pot. That century was littered with the corpses of those who paid the price for these tyrants' unwillingness to love their country unless it became, in their own eyes, beautiful. As Burke put it, by hating vices too much, they came to love men too little.

Is not the second alternative, however—loving my country merely because it is my own—equally bad? This appears to be nothing more than a form of narrow parochialism, an attitude nicely captured in a play by John Galsworthy entitled *Loyalties*. The tragedy of this play is generated by problems of social class and ethnic prejudice, and Galsworthy emphasizes the destructiveness of such loyalty to one's own. In a striking passage at the center of the drama, one of the characters notes that such loyalties are indistinguishable from mere prejudice and can only create unresolvable conflicts: "Prejudices, Adela—or are they loyalties—I don't know—criss-cross—we all cut each other's throats from the best of motives." If loyalty to one's own country is only a prejudice of this sort, it is likely to produce a "my country, right or wrong" attitude. And such an attitude seems most conducive to a kind of self-serving nationalism that places one's own country above all others. It may be true that the twentieth century witnessed much ideological fanaticism, but surely it also taught us the dangers of proud, self-interested jingoism and nationalist fervor. Perhaps frustrated love-of-the-good produces destructive revolution, but chauvinistic love-of-our-own easily leads to ethnic conflict and outright war among peoples. That is little more than a choice between devils. If these are our options, it might be best to give up on love of country altogether and see whether we can muddle through without it.

From a purely secular perspective, it may well be difficult to prevent the simple love of one's own from descending into dangerous nationalism. From a Christian perspective, however, there is actually a very good reason for this love of one's own. We can begin to understand what this reason might be by thinking for a moment not about love of country, but rather about a different kind of love, that of parents for their children. Children and countries share an important characteristic: we do not normally choose them. Rather, they are simply presented to us, and we take what we get. Parents love their children even when they are not beautiful; and they love them even when they are not good. Indeed, a parent who made his love conditional upon a child's maintaining some particular standard of virtu-

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ous behavior would be rightly regarded as something of a monster. Naturally, parents hope their children will become good, and they normally spend considerable time and effort trying to bring about this desirable result. But the child's goodness is not the *reason* for his parents' love; they do not love him *because* he is good. Parents love their children, rather, simply because they are their children.

This, I think, makes perfectly good sense from a Christian perspective. Christians are called to love as God loves us, which ultimately means to love every human being as a unique individual, in the fullest sense of that overused term. For most people, the family is the arena in which we are most profoundly challenged to attain this goal, because it is in the family that we most regularly, directly, and intensely encounter other people in the full uniqueness of their personality, with all of their foibles and idiosyncracies, all the hidden nooks and crannies of the soul that are never fully revealed but of which family members, for better and for worse, catch privileged glimpses. This little world of rich human interaction is the first and fundamental, though not the only, context in which we are called to learn what it really means to love another human being, however different he may be from us. And in this task the exquisite arbitrariness of the gift of children is a tremendous advantage. For it means that we cannot go easy on ourselves by picking those whom we are predisposed to like, or with whom we share important interests, or who are likely to become rich and famous; we must simply take whoever comes. The Christian, however, will not find this unreasonable, for the particular children whom we receive are, of course, not really arbitrary at all. We did not select them, it is true, but they were nevertheless chosen, and chosen for a purpose, by one whose wisdom is greater than ours; and we trust that He knows what He is doing. And so parents love their children, not because they are good, but because they are the ones whom God has given.

With this model of parental love before us, we are in a better position to understand the significance of loving that which is our own. That significance arises from what we might call the meaningfulness of our context in a particular place and time. I have suggested that we accept our unchosen children as a gift whereby God seeks to teach us the meaning of love by calling us to the task of loving these particular individuals. But those children are only one part of the broader context into which God has placed us, and that context—in which we learn the concrete meaning of love by learning to love concrete, particular persons—is, like the children, largely independent of our choosing. We can affect parts of it, of course, but in large measure it is simply given. We do not choose the town where we are born or raised; we choose neither our children nor our parents; many people in the world, of course, do not even choose their spouse, who is chosen for them; indeed, we do not even choose our friends exactly, since, though we select them to an extent, we do so from among those who merely happen to be around us. And, of course, we do not choose our country. The broad context of our lives is largely not of our choosing. Yet it does not seem troubling for people to love their hometown, their children and parents, their husband or wife, their friends. Why should their country be any different?

This may seem like a peculiar conclusion. Why should we feel any love for the arbitrary results of fate? In a certain sense it is true that what I have been calling our context is simply a matter of chance. From a Christian perspective, however, that is only a partial truth. For from that perspective, our context—the place in which we find ourselves, the people by whom we are surrounded—is charged with moral meaning, because God has placed us there. It is *our* context, the one that He has given us, and if we have eyes to see and ears to hear, then we are called to appreciate the goodness of His gifts. Like parents called to love the children they have not chosen, we are all called to love those around us, for whom God has made us at least partially responsible. He has given us, so to speak, a charge, and if we refuse our stations, it suggests that we think Him mistaken to have placed us here. In its own way, an unwillingness to occupy those stations reflects that desire to be the Author of the play, and not a mere character in it, that under other circumstances we would not hesitate to call the sin of pride. Accepting with love and gratitude our context, the place and people whom God has given us, is one way of recognizing that we are creatures who, unlike our Creator, must live in a particular place at a particular time.

But doesn't this noble rhetoric still conceal a danger, one suggested, in fact, by the Rodgers and Hammerstein verse alluded to earlier? "Do I love you because you're beautiful, or are you beautiful because I love you?" If we love our country, not because of any goodness or beauty it may possess, but simply because it is our own, do we not become prone, like the lover in the song, to attribute to it a beauty or a goodness it does not possess? Are we not likely to make of it a false god? This is indeed a danger, one against which we must remain continually vigilant. But it is much more of a danger, I think, for the secular nationalist than for one operating from the Christian perspective I have sought to describe here. For nothing in my argument requires making any special claim of superiority on our own behalf; quite the contrary, it relies heavily upon the assumption that no country can claim to be truly just or good. To love our country in the way I have described we need not imagine that it is ultimately better or more

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virtuous than any other. The differences we observe in other countries need give rise to no hostility, nor need we seek to assert ourselves at others' expense. As C. S. Lewis has written,

> Patriotism of this kind is not in the least aggressive. It asks only to be let alone. It becomes militant only to protect what it loves. In any mind which has a pennyworth of imagination it produces a good attitude towards foreigners. . . . Once you have realized that the Frenchmen like *café complet* just as we like bacon and eggs—why, good luck to them and let them have it. The last thing we want is to make everywhere else just like our own home. It would not be home unless it were different.

From within such a perspective, we can readily recognize the value of other, different ways of life. For just as we cherish the country God has given us, others may cherish their own country as the one God has given them. National chauvinism will not grow well in such soil.

Though I have sought to defend love of country on the basis of loving one's own, love of the good surely plays some role in a healthy patriotism as well. This is perhaps best expressed in negative terms: although we do not love our country because it is good, we might have to cease loving it were it to become particularly wicked. Or (perhaps better) if there were still a sense in which we continued to love it even then, we could not, at any rate, act on that love as we might under other circumstances. Love of the good thus sets limits of a sort on love of our own. Similarly, even if we love our country because it is ours, and not for the sake of a goodness it does not possess, we can still strive to make it better, just as parents strive to make their children good without ceasing to love them when they misbehave.

Loving our country because it is good and loving it simply because it is ours are thus both important; ultimately, neither perspective can stand entirely alone. They are not, however, equally in need of defenders. For if our country were ever to become truly good, it would be obvious enough that we should love it; and there is, in our contemporary world—and especially in the academy—no shortage of people hectoring us and insisting, in harsh and accusing tones, that we should certainly not love it until it becomes much better than it is today. We are much less likely to be reminded that we may—and, if my argument is persuasive, should—love it, warts and all, simply because it is ours. Christians, however, should not be afraid to say this. After all, neither my wife, nor my children, nor my friends have achieved perfection any more than my country has, yet no one would criticize me for loving them. They are God's gifts to me and are to be cherished for that reason. And if their Giver can love me with all my blemishes and imperfections, then surely I can love His gifts in the same spirit. One's country should be counted among those gifts.

In a sense, then, Rousseau missed the point when he criticized Christianity for giving us "two legislative orders, two rulers, two homelands." It is true that Christians inhabit this world "like a pilgrim in a foreign land," longing for that city where we will find our perfect rest. But our loyalties are not thereby divided; they are multiplied. The one who learns to love the great Giver of all life will not suddenly forget how to love His gifts; nor will he who worships the God who is Love find his own capacity for love diminished. In Bonhoeffer's wonderful image from the passage at the head of this essay, "Where the ground bass is firm and clear, there is nothing to stop the counterpoint from being developed to the utmost of its limits." Christians, then, are precisely the kind of patriots that a decent polity should want to have. They know that their country has its faults. But they do not imagine that it can earn their love only by becoming faultless. They love their country, not because it is good, but because it is given. FT

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Lincoln on Judicial Despotism

Robert P. George

After the Supreme Court's landmark 1954 decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* ordering the desegregation of public schools in Topeka, Kansas, lawsuits promptly were brought to dismantle legally sanctioned segregation in other states. One of these was Arkansas. There, Governor Orville Faubus and other state officials maintained that they were not bound by the Supreme Court's ruling in *Brown*. That decision was constitutionally incorrect, they insisted, and amounted to a federal court's usurpation of the constitutional authority of the states. Moreover, Arkansas was not a party in the case. Therefore, they contended that a lower federal court in Little Rock had no constitutional authority to order the desegregation of public schools in Arkansas on the basis of the *Brown* decision.

Arkansas' appeal of the lower court's order eventually made it to the Supreme Court of the United States in the 1958 case of *Cooper v. Aaron*. No one had any real doubts about what the outcome of that case would be. The Justices would certainly uphold the desegregation order. They did so, however, in a ruling that did more than merely remind the Governor and other state officials that they had "no power to nullify a federal court order." In a unanimous opinion, the Court asserted, for the first time, that "the federal judiciary is supreme in the exposition of the law of the Constitution."

The idea of judicial supremacy—or the idea that the supremacy of the Constitution entails judicial supremacy in constitutional interpretation—has come to be so widely held not only in the legal profession but also by the public at large that today it seems unremarkable. As the nation prepares for our annual celebration of Abraham Lincoln's birthday, however, we have an occasion to consider just how remarkable it is, and just how far it is from the Great Emancipator's understanding of the legitimate scope of federal judicial power.

According to the standard account of the matter, the power of judicial review—that is, the authority of the federal judiciary to invalidate acts of Congress and the President when they are deemed to be unconstitutional—came to be entrenched in our law by the acceptance, tacit or otherwise, of the Supreme Court's ruling in the 1803 case of *Marbury v. Madison*. Of course, nowhere in the text of the Constitution is any such power granted. Rather, Chief Justice John Marshall inferred the existence of the power, or, at least, something like it, from the fact that the written Constitution declares itself to be the Supreme Law of the Land, combined with the evident principle that, in Marshall's language, "It is emphatically the province and duty of the judicial department to say what the law is."

Now, a lively dispute has existed from the moment the Court handed down its decision in *Marbury* as to the scope of that ruling. Even today, some scholars argue that it did nothing more than declare that the Supreme Court is within its rights in declining to exercise an authority putatively conferred upon it by Congress when such authority exceeds the jurisdiction granted to the Court under Article Three of the Constitution. Certainly, as a technical matter, all the Court did in *Marbury* was refuse to exercise original jurisdiction beyond what it was granted in Article Three on the ground that the expansion of its original jurisdiction by Section 13 of the Judiciary Act of 1789 was unconstitutional. So, the contemporary constitutional scholar Robert Lowry Clinton argues that it is a mistake to read the case as claiming a judicial power to tell the President or Congress what they can or cannot do under the Constitution. He maintains that it simply stands for the power of the Court, as a coequal branch of government, to act on

ROBERT P. GEORGE *is McCormick Professor of Jurisprudence and Director of the James Madison Program in American Ideals and Institutions at Princeton University. He is author, most recently, of* The Clash of Orthodoxies.

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its own interpretation of the Constitution in deciding what *it* can and cannot do. This, Clinton observes, is entirely consistent with the recognition of a like power in the other branches.

Of course, the conventional reading of *Marbury*—shared by the decision's friends and foes alike—has it standing for a considerably broader scope of judicial authority. Thomas Jefferson condemned the decision precisely because he viewed it as claiming a power of the courts to impose constitutional interpretations on the other branches. This, he later asserted, would have the effect of "placing us under the despotism of an oligarchy." And at the opposite extreme from Professor Clinton's reading is the reading offered by the Supreme Court in *Cooper v. Aaron*. What I described as a "remarkable" claim to judicial supremacy, the *Cooper* Justices presented as nothing more than a straightforward, uncontroversial, altogether mundane and logical implication of Marshall's proposition about the "province and duty of the judicial department." Indeed, the paragraph in which the Justices make the claim offers nothing in its support beyond the invocation of *Marbury*.

Whatever *Marbury* was supposed to mean about the scope of the power of judicial review, it is a notable fact that the Court declined to exercise that power to declare another act of Congress to be unconstitutional until 1857, when it ruled in the case of *Dred Scott v. Sandford*. Scott was a slave in Missouri who had been taken by his master into the free state of Illinois and the free Wisconsin Territory. He then brought a suit demanding his freedom in St. Louis County Court under Missouri law, claiming that he was legally entitled to be free by virtue of having resided in a free state or territory. He won in the trial court but the ruling in his favor was reversed by the Supreme Court of Missouri. He then brought a new case in the federal courts to consider, among other things, whether a state could reverse the "once free, always free" principle under which the St. Louis County Court had ruled in Scott's favor. Once the matter entered the federal courts, it became a massive political hot potato. Sandford (whose name was actually Sanford), acting on behalf of his sister who was Dred Scott's owner, injected into the litigation the question whether any black person, free or slave, could be a citizen of the United States, and he directly challenged the constitutionality of the Missouri Compromise of 1820, which forbade slavery in the Louisiana Territory north of latitude 36° 30′. Although the power of Congress to forbid slavery in federal territories was well-established, Sandford argued that slaves were private property of the sort protected by the Constitution against deprivation without due process of law, and that therefore Congress lacked any constitutional authority to ban slavery in the territories.

When the matter reached the Supreme Court of the United States, Chief Justice Roger Brooke Taney, writing for a seven-man majority against two dissenters, accepted Sandford's major contentions, not only sending Scott back into slavery, but holding, in effect, that he had never been free. The majority ruled that blacks could not be citizens of the United States, and therefore lacked the concomitant right to bring lawsuits in federal courts. Moreover, they held that Congress lacked constitutional authority to forbid or abolish slavery in federal territories. And still further, since slaves were, the Court ruled, personal property protected by the Constitution, the Missouri Compromise was unconstitutional.

All of this added up to a sweeping and profound ruling. The Court had massively injected itself into the most divisive and highly morally charged issue of the day. In my edited book entitled *Great Cases in Constitutional Law*, there is a most interesting exchange between Prof. Cass Sunstein of the University of Chicago and Prof. James McPherson, my colleague at Princeton, regarding the political impact of the *Dred Scott* decision. Sunstein defends the commonly held view that the case polarized an already dangerously divided country and made the Civil War and its toll of carnage almost inevitable. Instead of ending the conflict over slavery by definitively resolving it, as Taney apparently hoped to do, the Court, according to Sunstein, intensified the conflict and heightened emotions. McPherson holds the minority view that the case "did not really polarize the country any more than it was already polarized by the issue of slavery in the territories."

Whichever scholar has the better argument, they agree that the decision focused the debate over slavery and introduced into the already heady brew of issues involved in that debate the question of the scope of judicial power under the Constitution. McPherson points out that "so thoroughly did the *Dred Scott* decision pervade and structure the Lincoln-Douglas debates [in 1858] that in one of those debates a Douglas supporter shouted from the audience to Lincoln: 'Give us something besides *Dred Scott*.' Quick as a cat Lincoln responded: 'Yes, no doubt you want to hear something that don't hurt.'"

To Lincoln *Dred Scott* was an abomination, but for reasons of principle going even beyond those set forth by the dissenting Justices in the case. That Lincoln was devoted to the Declaration of Independence and viewed its statement of principles as integral to the American scheme of constitutional government is, if anything, an understatement. However, the Declaration was far from the only writing of Jefferson's of which Lincoln was mindful. In Jefferson's letter of September 28, 1820 to William C. Jarvis, from which I quoted earlier his line about judicial "despotism," he explained his oppo-

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sition to judicial supremacy in constitutional interpretation as follows:

> The Constitution has erected no such single tribunal, knowing that to whatever hands confided, with the corruptions of time and party, its members would become despots. It has more wisely made all the departments coequal and cosovereign within themselves. If the legislature fails to pass laws for a census, for paying the judges and other officers of government, for establishing a militia, for naturalization as prescribed by the Constitution, or if they fail to meet in Congress, the judges cannot issue their mandamus to them; if the President fails to provide the place of a judge, to appoint other civil and military officers, to issue requisite commissions, the judges cannot force him.

Now, I daresay that to us—living in the aftermath of an expansion of judicial power that may, perhaps, more properly be conceived as having been expressed and ratified, rather than created, by the Supreme Court in *Cooper v. Aaron*—this language is quite shocking. Part of this, no doubt, has to do with the prestige that courts, including the Supreme Court of the United States, enjoy in elite sectors of our culture. Criticism of the scope of judicial power is often perceived by its partisans as, in effect, attacking the independence of the judiciary or even the ideal of judicial independence. The key thing to see is that Jefferson's language was not at all shocking to Lincoln. On the contrary, it is entirely in line with his own fears of the political consequences of judicial supremacy.

Like Jefferson, Lincoln believed that courts, including the Supreme Court of the United States, could violate the Constitution and even undermine constitutional government. That judges, whenever they invalidate executive or legislative acts, purport to speak in the name of the Constitution, and claim merely to be giving effect to its commands, was in Lincoln's view no guarantee against judicial despotism. Judges exercising effectively unconstrained power were, in his view, no less a threat to the Constitution than other governmental officers exercising such power. His fear was not that judges would sometimes err in their constitutional rulings. Given human fallibility, that is inevitable and unremarkable. His fear, rather, was that judges are capable of behaving unconstitutionally, just as other officials are capable of behaving unconstitutionally, by exceeding the authority granted to them under the Constitution and thereby usurping the authority allocated to other officials in a delicate system of checks and balances. Indeed, Lincoln believed that judicial violations of the Constitution were in certain respects graver matters than the violations of elected officials.

Lincoln, of course, was a lawyer. He knew from experience that judges come in all shapes and sizes—competent and incompetent, conscientious and slapdash, honorable and corrupt. He wasn't a skeptic after the fashion of the legal realists who would rise to prominence in the law schools fifty years or so after his death. But his view of courts was realistic. He knew that it was essential to the success of a lawyer to know the law; but he also knew that it didn't hurt to know the judge. He believed in courts but he didn't venerate them. Nor did he automatically identify what the courts did or said with "the law."

His mature and most profound reflections on the scope of judicial power and the role of the judiciary in the American constitutional system came in relation to the debate over *Dred Scott*. By 1858, when the question was at the heart of the political contest in which he was engaged, the Court had ruled, but the question of the ruling's status was far from resolved. Recall that the ruling was the first invalidation of a federal statute by the Court in more than fifty years, and only the second in the nation's history. The question of the proper posture toward it for the other branches to adopt was very much alive, and a politician's position on the question might well determine his electoral fate. Bound up, as it was, with the urgent and divisive issue of slavery, there was no avoiding the issue—despite the best efforts of even the most agile political types, such as Stephen Douglas.

Upon his election as President, Lincoln faced the matter squarely in his Inaugural Address on March 4, 1861. With the specter of civil war looming, the new President, who had denounced the *Dred Scott* decision repeatedly in his senatorial campaign against Douglas in 1858 as well as in the presidential campaign, turned attention to it in his remarks to the nation.

> I do not forget the position assumed by some that constitutional questions are to be decided by the Supreme Court, nor do I deny that such decisions must be binding in any case upon the parties to a suit as to the object of that suit, while they are also entitled to very high respect and consideration in all parallel cases by other departments of the government. And while it is obviously possible that such decision may be erroneous in any given case, still the evil effect following it, being limited to that particular case, with the chance that it may be overruled and never become a precedent for other cases, can better be borne than could the evils of a different practice. At the same time, the candid citizen must confess that if the policy of the gov-

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> ernment upon vital questions affecting the whole people is to be irrevocably fixed by decisions of the Supreme Court, the instant they are made in ordinary litigation between parties in personal actions, the people will have ceased to be their own rulers, having to that extent practically resigned their government into the hands of that eminent tribunal.

For Lincoln, then, the evil of the *Dred Scott* decision was not merely the expansion of slavery. It was that the decision threatened to undermine the basic principles of republican government precisely by establishing judicial supremacy in matters of constitutional interpretation. It was not merely that the Court decided the suit in favor of the wrong party. It was that the Court claimed authority to decide for the other branches once and for all what the Constitution required, thus placing them in a position of inferiority and subservience. For the people to "resign their government into the hands of that eminent tribunal" would be, according to Lincoln, the abandonment of democratic self-government and the acquiescence in oligarchic despotism. There is a not-very-faint echo of Jefferson in Lincoln's First Inaugural.

In office, Lincoln gave effect to his position against judicial supremacy by consistently refusing to treat the *Dred Scott* decision as creating a rule of law binding on the executive branch. His administration issued passports and other documents to free blacks, thus treating them as citizens of the United States despite the Court's denial of their status as citizens. He signed legislation that plainly placed restrictions on slavery in the western territories in defiance of Taney's ruling. For his critics, these actions, combined particularly with his suspension of the writ of habeas corpus, revealed him to be a lawless and tyrannical ruler, one who had no regard for the constitutional limits of his own power. But none can say that he had not made his opposition to judicial supremacy clear before assuming office.

It is ironic that the declaration of judicial supremacy made by the Warren Court came in the context of the Court's efforts to enforce a ruling in the cause of racial equality and civil rights. The occasion for Lincoln's declaration of implacable opposition to judicial supremacy had been a decision which, above all others, stained the Court's reputation as an institution dedicated to, as it says above the entrance to the Marble Temple in Washington, D.C., "equal justice under law." Indeed, the popularity of the Court's ruling in the *Brown* case (not, initially at least, in the South, but throughout much of the country and certainly among journalists, professors, and other opinion leaders) no doubt helps to explain why the remarkable dictum in *Cooper v. Aaron* was so little remarked on at the time, and why few have noted its incompatibility with the principles of Jefferson and Lincoln.

I find that my own students are more than merely surprised to learn about the views of the author of the Declaration of Independence as well as the Great Emancipator. They, too, have drunk in the idea that courts, particularly the Supreme Court (upon which more than a few imagine themselves someday serving), are the ultimate protectors of rights and, as such, should have the ultimate say on constitutional questions. After all, they reason, somebody, or some institution, has to have the final word, or else nothing is ever settled. And students, at least my students, want things to be settled. And the ultimate settler of things—when the things in question are politically ultimate things, constitutional things—should be a nonpolitical body. Politics, my students say, is too messy. Democratic institutions are too prone to passion, prejudice, and foolishness for us to entrust to them matters of constitutional significance. We don't want to make our rights subject to voting, they say. There needs to be a higher institution to provide a check against the bigots and demagogues of politics—an institution where matters are resolved by calm and rational inquiry and judgment; an institution whose membership is drawn from a narrower, more refined, more highly educated circle; one that is not subject to political retaliation for unpopular decisions of principle. What would have happened, they ask, had the political branches felt themselves free to dispute *Brown v. Board of Education*?

One imagines Lincoln in the classroom reminding the youngsters that the unchecked power to do good is unavoidably also the unchecked power to do evil. If we like what the Justices did in *Brown v. Board*, let us not forget what they did in *Dred Scott*. And there is more to the balance sheet. Was it not the Court, after all, that during the period from 1905 to 1937 repeatedly invalidated both state and federal worker protection laws and social welfare legislation? Did the Justices not read into the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment a "right to freedom of contract" in whose name they frustrated the legislative will and usurped the constitutional authority of the elected representatives of the people? This, in any event, is the conventional reading of the history by contemporary liberals and conservatives alike.

And then there is the issue of abortion, surely the most vexing, divisive, and morally charged issue of our own time. Does the Supreme Court's ruling striking down state prohibitions of abortion in the 1973 cases of *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton* belong on the plus side of the Court's ledger with *Brown v. Board* or on the minus side with *Dred Scott*? Does that in turn depend on whether one happens to see abortion as a woman's

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right or as a violation of the rights of an unborn child? If so, should one's view of the proper scope of judicial power, and the legitimacy of judicial supremacy, depend upon the contingent fact that the Court happened to come down the way it did on abortion? After all, the Court could have come down, as the German Constitutional Court did in a 1975 decision interpreting Germany's Basic Law, in precisely the opposite way—invalidating a legislatively enacted liberalization of abortion. Supporters of the right to abortion who criticize the German decision make exactly the same arguments—the same Lincolnian arguments—against judicial supremacy that supporters of the right to life who criticize *Roe v. Wade* make. Their argument is that, to put it in Lincoln's language, "if the policy of the government upon vital questions affecting the whole people is to be irrevocably fixed by decisions of the Supreme Court, the instant they are made in ordinary litigation between parties in personal actions, the people will have ceased to be their own rulers, having to that extent practically resigned their government into the hands of that eminent tribunal." FT

Tourney's End

Knowing how much has been lost already, how much
that is owed to Being, still unborn, morose, I brood,
crisscrossed by jealousies, betrayed by all—
then weary of tourneys, of posting banners for such
in a world that will not change, its factions cease to feud,
while we remain no worthier of a better. Thus, grown old,
absurd, I wait for laughter to validate the jest:
if that be real, we may be fools that much less.

And while the evening weaves all into its own bed
of shadows, Venus, in violet air, gives out a flash.
From this concrete perch, through these primate bars,
I reach beyond where reason's faith has led,
these fingers reach that vagrantly would catch,
for keeps, the scattered recompense of stars.

Charles H. Renning

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The Virtue of Hate

Meir Y. Soloveichik

> *When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there. . . . Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."*
>
> —Luke 23:33-34

In his classic Holocaust text, *The Sunflower*, Simon Wiesenthal recounts the following experience. As a concentration camp prisoner, the monotony of his work detail is suddenly broken when he is brought to the bedside of a dying Nazi. The German delineates the gruesome details of his career, describing how he participated in the murder and torture of hundreds of Jews. Exhibiting, or perhaps feigning, regret and remorse, he explains that he sought a Jew—any Jew—to whom to confess, and from whom to beseech forgiveness. Wiesenthal silently contemplates the wretched creature lying before him, and then, unable to comply but unable to condemn, walks out of the room. Tortured by his experience, wondering whether he did the right thing, Wiesenthal submitted this story as the subject of a symposium, including respondents of every religious stripe. An examination of the respective replies of Christians and Jews reveals a remarkable contrast. "When the first edition of *The Sunflower* was published," writes Dennis Prager, "I was intrigued by the fact that all the Jewish respondents thought Simon Wiesenthal was right in not forgiving the repentant Nazi mass murderer, and that the Christians thought he was wrong."

Indeed, the Christian symposiasts did sound a more sympathetic note. "I can well understand Simon's refusal [to forgive]," reflects Father Edward Flannery, "but I find it impossible to defend it." Archbishop Desmond Tutu cites the crucifixion as his source. Arguing that the newly empowered South African blacks readily forgave their white tormentors, Tutu explains that they followed "the Jewish rabbi who, when he was crucified, said, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*" If we look only to retributive justice, argues Tutu, "then we could just as well close up shop. Forgiveness is not some nebulous thing. It is practical politics. Without forgiveness, there is no future."

And yet, many Jews would respond to Tutu's scriptural source by citing another verse, one that also describes a Jew strung up by his enemies, yet who responds to his enemies in a very different, perhaps less Christian, way:

> So the Philistines seized [Samson] and gouged out his eyes. They brought him down to Gaza and bound him with bronze shackles. . . . They made him stand between the pillars. . . . Then Samson called to the Lord and said, "Lord God, remember me and strengthen me only this once, O God, so that with this one act of revenge I may pay back the Philistines for my two eyes."
>
> And Samson grasped the two middle pillars on which the house rested, . . . [and] then Samson said, "Let me die with the Philistines." He strained with all his might; and the house fell on the lords and all the people who were in it. So those he killed at his death were more than those he had killed during his life.

The symposiasts' varying theological responses, Prager suggests, reflect "the nature of the Jewish and Christian responses to evil, which are related to their differing understandings of forgiveness." Indeed, the contrast between the two Testaments indicates that this is the case: Jesus' words could not be more different than Samson's.

RABBI MEIR Y. SOLOVEICHIK *is Resident Scholar at the Jewish Center in Manhattan and a Beren Fellow at Yeshiva University. He is currently studying philosophy of religion at Yale Divinity School.*

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Some might respond that the raging, vengeful Samson is the Bible's sinful exception, rather than its rule; or, perhaps, that Samson acted in self-defense. Yet a further perusal indicates that the Hebrew prophets not only hated their enemies, but rather reveled in their suffering, finding in it a fitting justice. The great Samuel, having come upon the Amalekite king Agag, after Agag was already captured and the Amalekites exterminated, responds in righteous anger:

> Then Samuel said, "Bring Agag king of the Amalekites here to me." And Agag came to him haltingly. Agag said, "Surely the bitterness of death is past." But Samuel said, "As your sword has made women childless, so your mother shall be childless among women." And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord in Gilgal.

And lest one dismiss Samuel's and Samson's anger as exhibitions of male machismo, it bears mentioning that the prophetess Deborah appears to relish the gruesome death of her enemy, the Philistine Sisera, who had, fittingly, been executed by another woman. Every bloody detail is recounted in Deborah's ebullient song:

> Most blessed of women be Jael, the wife of
> Heber the Kenite
> Of tent-dwelling women most blessed.
> She put her hand to the tent peg and her right
> hand to the workmen's mallet.
> She struck Sisera a blow, she crushed his head,
> she shattered and pierced his temple.
> He sank, he fell, he lay still at her feet;
> At her feet he sank, he fell;
> there he sank, there he fell dead.
> . . . So perish all your enemies, O LORD!

In his *At the Entrance to the Garden of Eden,* journalist Yossi Klein Halevi speaks with Johanna, a Catholic nun who is struck by the hatred Israelis bear for their enemies. Johanna tells of an Israeli Hebrew teacher "who was very close to us. She told us how her young son hates Saddam. . . . She said it with such enthusiasm. She was so proud of her son." "I realized," Johanna concluded, "that hatred is in the Jewish religion." She was right. The Hebrew prophets spoke in the name of a God who, in Exodus' articulation, may "forgive iniquity and transgression and sin," but Who also "by no means exonerates [the guilty]." Likewise, in refusing to forgive their enemies, Jewish leaders sought not merely their defeat, but their disgrace. When Queen Esther had already visited defeat upon Haman—the Hitler of his time, attempted exterminator of the Jewish people—and had killed Haman's supporters and sons, King Ahasuerus asks what more she could possible want:

> The king said to Queen Esther, "In the capital of Susa the Jews have killed also the ten sons of Haman. . . . Now what is your petition? It shall be granted you. And what further is your request? It shall be fulfilled." Esther said, "If it pleases the king . . . let the ten sons of Haman be hanged on the gallows."

Interestingly, the most vivid response in Wiesenthal's symposium was also written by a woman. The Jewish writer Cynthia Ozick, reflecting on how Wiesenthal, in a moment of mercy, brushed a fly away from the Nazi's broken body, concludes her essay in Deborah's blunt but poetic manner:

> Let the SS man die unshriven.
> Let him go to hell.
> Sooner the fly to God than he.

During my regular weekly coffees with my friend Fr. Jim White, an Episcopal priest, there was one issue to which our conversation would incessantly turn, and one on which we could never agree: Is an utterly evil man—Hitler, Stalin, Osama bin Laden—deserving of a theist's love? I could never stomach such a notion, while Fr. Jim would argue passionately in favor of the proposition. Judaism, I would argue, does demand love for our fellow human beings, but only to an extent. "Hate" is not always synonymous with the terribly sinful. While Moses commanded us "not to hate our brother in our hearts," a man's immoral actions can serve to sever the bonds of brotherhood between himself and humanity. Regarding a *rasha,* a Hebrew term for the hopelessly wicked, the Talmud clearly states: *mitzvah lisnoso*—one is obligated to hate him.

Some would seek to minimize this difference between our faiths. Eva Fleischner, a Catholic interfaith specialist and another *Sunflower* symposiast, argues that "Christians—and non-Christians in their wake—have misread, and continue to misread, [Christian texts] interpreting Jesus' teaching to mean that we are to forgive anyone and everyone. . . . The element that is lost sight of is that Jesus challenges *me* to forgive evil done to *me.* . . . Nowhere does he tell us to forgive the wrong done to another." Perhaps. But even so, a theological chasm remains between the Jewish and Christian viewpoints on the matter. As we can see from Samson's rage, Judaism believes that while forgiveness is often a virtue, hate can be virtuous when one is dealing with the frightfully wicked. Rather than forgive, we can wish ill; rather than hope for repentance, we can instead hope that our enemies experience the wrath of God.

There is, in fact, no minimizing the difference between Judaism and Christianity on whether hate can be virtuous. Indeed, Christianity's founder acknowl-

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edged his break with Jewish tradition on this matter from the very outset: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. . . . Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect." God, Jesus argues, loves the wicked, and so must we. In disagreeing, Judaism does not deny the importance of imitating God; Jews hate the wicked because they believe that God despises the wicked as well.

Among Orthodox Jews, there is an oft-used Hebrew phrase whose equivalent I have not found among Christians. The phrase is *yemach shemo,* which means, *may his name be erased.* It is used whenever a great enemy of the Jewish nation, of the past or present, is mentioned. For instance, one might very well say casually, in the course of conversation, "Thank God, my grandparents left Germany before Hitler, *yemach shemo,* came to power." Or: "My parents were murdered by the Nazis, *yemach shemam.*" Can one imagine a Christian version of such a statement? Would anyone speak of the massacres wrought by "Pol Pot, may his name be erased"? Do any Christians speak in such a way? Has any seminary student ever attached a Latin equivalent of *yemach shemo* to the names "Pontius Pilate" or "Judas"? Surely not. Christians, I sense, would find the very notion repugnant, just as many Jews would gag upon reading the Catholic rosary: "O my Jesus . . . lead all souls to heaven, especially those most in need of thy mercy."

Why, then, this remarkable disagreement between faiths? Why do Jews and Christians respond so differently to wickedness? Why do Jews refuse at times to forgive? And if the Hebrew prophets and judges believed ardently in the "virtue of hate," what about Christianity caused it to break with its Old Testament roots?

"More than a decade of weekly dialogue with Christians and intimate conversation with Christian friends," writes Prager, "has convinced me that, aside from the divinity of Jesus, the greatest—and even more important—difference between Judaism and Christianity, or perhaps only between most Christians and Jews, is their different understanding of forgiveness and, ultimately, how to react to evil." Here Prager takes one theological step too many and commits, in this single statement, two errors. The first is to deem the issue of forgiveness more important than that of Jesus' identity. Such a statement, to my mind, sullies the memory of thousands of Jews who died rather than proclaim Jesus Lord. Yet Prager also misses the fact that these two issues, that of approaching Jesus and that of approaching our enemies, are essentially one and the same: that the very question of how to approach our enemies depends on whether one believes that Jesus was merely a misguided mortal, or the Son of God. Let us examine how each faith's outlook on Jesus provides the theological underpinnings for its respective approach to hate.

The essence of a religion can be discovered by asking its adherents one question: What, to your mind, was the seminal moment in the history of the world? For Christians, the answer is easy: the passion of Jesus Christ, the sacrifice of the Lamb of God for the sins of the world. Or: "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son" so that through his death the world would find salvation. Jews, on the other hand, see history's focal moment as the Sinai revelation, the day the Decalogue was delivered. On this day, we believe, God formed an eternal covenant with the Jewish people and began to communicate to them His Torah, the Almighty's moral and religious commandments. The most fascinating element of this event is that before forming this Covenant with the Hebrews, God *first asked their permission to do so.* England's Chief Rabbi, Jonathan Sacks, describes the episode:

> Before stating the terms of the covenant, God told Moses to speak to the people and determine whether or not they agreed to become a nation under the sovereignty of God. Only when "all the people responded together, 'We will do everything the Lord has said'" did the revelation proceed. . . . The first-ever democratic mandate takes place, the idea that there can be no valid rule without the agreement of all those who are affected by it.

There is a wonderful bit of Jewish lore concerning the giving of God's Torah, in which God is depicted as a merchant, proffering His Law to every nation on the planet. Each one considers God's wares, and each then finds a flaw. One refuses to refrain from theft; another, from murder. Finally, God chances upon the Jewish people, who gravely agree to shoulder the responsibility of a moral life. The message of this *midrash* is that God's covenant is one that anyone can join; God leaves it up to us.

Consider for a moment the extraordinary contrast. For Christians, God acted on humanity's behalf, without its knowledge and without its consent. The crucifixion is a story of a loving God seeking humanity's salvation, though it never requested it, though it scarcely deserved it. Jews, on the other hand, believe that God's covenant was formed by the free consent of His people. The giving of the Torah is a story of God seeking to provide humanity with the opportunity to make moral decisions. To my knowledge, not a single Jewish source asserts that God deeply desires to save all humanity, nor

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that He loves every member of the human race. Rather, many a Jewish source maintains that God affords every human being the opportunity to choose his or her moral fate, and will then judge him or her, and choose whether to love him or her, on the basis of that decision. Christianity's focus is on love and salvation; Judaism's on decision and action.

The difference runs deeper. Both the Talmud and the New Testament have a great deal to say about the afterlife. Both ardently assert that it exists, and both assure the righteous that they will receive eternal reward and warn the wicked of the reality of damnation. Yet one striking distinction exists between these two affirmations of eternal life: only the Christian Testament deliberately and constantly links the promise of heaven with ethical exhortation, appealing to the hope of eternity as the incentive for righteous action. For Christians, every believer's ultimate desire and goal must be to experience eternal salvation. Leading a righteous earthly existence is understood as a means towards attaining this goal. Jews, on the other hand, insist that performing sacred acts while alive on earth is our ultimate objective; heaven is merely where we receive our reward after our goal has been attained. The Talmud, in this regard, makes a statement that any Christian would find mind-boggling: "One hour obeying God's commandments in this world is more glorious than an eternity in the World to Come."

This difference in emphasis can be seen most clearly by contrasting the central New Testament statement on ethics, the Sermon on the Mount, with Rabbinic writings. Here are some of Jesus' ethical exhortations:

> Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
> Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
> For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.
> Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven.

A traditional Jew studying Jesus' style in delivering the Sermon on the Mount is instantly reminded of the Mishnaic tractate *Ethics of the Fathers*, a collection of rabbinical sayings that Jesus' words appear to echo. Consider these parallel passages from the tractate:

> Fortunate is man, for he was created in the image of God.
> Fortunate are the Israelites, for they are called the children of God.
> Be bold as a leopard, light as an eagle, swift as a deer, and strong as a lion in pursuit of the will of your Father in heaven.

While the common phrases used by Jesus—"fortunate are," "Father in heaven"—are standard rabbinic utterances, Jesus' repeated support for his statements—"for they will inherit the kingdom of heaven"—is his own. Such a phrase appears nowhere in the rabbinic ethical writings. Their focus is more on action than on salvation.

The contrast extends to differing ways of celebrating holidays. In speaking to Fr. Jim about our respective faiths, I told him about the phenomenon of "Yom Kippur Jews." Many of my nonobservant coreligionists, I said, show up in synagogue only on the Day of Atonement and so experience a Judaism that focuses only on judgment and repentance. They never experience Judaism at its most joyous moments: Passover, Hanukkah, Purim. "I have the opposite problem," said Jim. "Some people show up in church for Easter only—Christianity at its most joyous. And so they never think about judgment and repentance."

Both rabbis and priests would appreciate regularly packed houses of worship; but the contrast between the central days of the Jewish and Christian calendars is instructive. Christians celebrate a day when, they believe, Jesus was given his place in heaven and so, at least potentially, was every member of humanity. Yom Kippur, in contrast, is not a day for celebration but for solemnity, a day for focusing not on salvation but on action. Jews recite, again and again, a long litany of sins that they might have committed; they pray for forgiveness, and conclude, time and again, with the sentence: "May it be Thy will, Lord our God, that I not sin again." While the entire day is devoted to prayer, and to evaluation of past deeds, the concept of reward and punishment in the afterlife is *not mentioned once*. The only question of concern is whether, at the end of the day, God will consider us sufficiently repentant. Yom Kippur's climax comes at sunset, during the *neilah*, or "closing" prayer. After begging once again for forgiveness, Jews the world over end the day with the recitation of "Our Father, Our King," named thusly because of the first phrase in every sentence:

> Our Father, our King, we have sinned before You.
> Our Father, our King, we have no king but You.
> Our Father, our King, return us in wholehearted repentance before You.

We ask God for mercy and for forgiveness, attributes of God that Judaism holds dear. But then our thoughts turn to the utterly evil and unrepentant. Towards the end of this prayer, one anguished, pain-filled sentence

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stands out: "Our Father, our King, avenge, before our eyes, the spilled blood of your servants." After a day devoted to prayer, synagogues everywhere are filled with the cry of fasting, weary, exhausted Jews. They have spent the past twenty-five hours meditating upon their sins and asking for forgiveness. Now, they suddenly turn their attention to those who gave no thought to forgiveness, no thought to God, no thought to the dignity of the Jewish people. After focusing on their own actions, Jews turn to those of others, and their parched throats mouth this message: "Father, do not forgive them, for they know well what they do."

The essence of each religion is reflected in its attitude toward the sinner. The existence of hell should be a painful proposition for Christians, who profess to believe that Christ died to redeem the world. C. S. Lewis, in his *The Problem of Pain*, mournfully admits as much. Yet the doctrines of free will and divine justice compel him to admit that some will not be redeemed.

> There is no doctrine which I would more willingly remove from Christianity than this, if it lay in my power. But it has the full support of Scripture and, specifically, of Our Lord's own words; it has always been held by Christendom; and it has the support of reason.

The notion that someone may be eternally damned, Lewis writes, is one that he "detests" with all his heart; yet anyone who refuses to submit to salvation cannot ultimately be saved. Despite this, Lewis adds that even these wretches must be in our prayers. "Christian charity," he stresses, "counsels us to make every effort for the conversion of such a man: to prefer his conversion, at the peril of our own lives, perhaps of our own souls, to his punishment; to prefer it infinitely."

Here Judaism strongly disagrees. For Jews deny that there ever was a "divine labor" to redeem the world; rather, God gave humanity the means for its own redemption, and its members will be judged by the choices they make. Christians may maintain that no human being is unloved by the God who died on his or her behalf, but Jews insist that while no human being is denied the chance to *become* worthy of God's love, not every human being engages in actions so as to be worthy of that love, and those unworthy of divine love do not deserve our love either.

This distinction between salvation and decision is evident in the fact that some Christians hold out hope for something that traditional Jews never even consider: that every human being will ultimately be saved. As Fr. Richard John Neuhaus notes, some verses in the New Testament have been said to assert this explicitly ("Will All Be Saved?" FT, Public Square, August/September 2001). Take, for example, 1 Corinthians: "For as all die in Adam, so will all be made alive in Jesus Christ." Romans states it even more strongly: "For just as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all, so one man's act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all." Pope John Paul II has suggested that we cannot say with certainty that even Judas is in hell.

Forget Judas, a Jew might respond. What about Hitler? Even here, Fr. Neuhaus refuses to relent: "Hitler may have repented, turning to the mercy of God, even as his finger pressed the trigger." Maybe, Neuhaus suggests, Hitler and Mao spend thousands of years in purgatory. Or perhaps, he whimsically says, "Hitler in heaven will be forever a little dog to whom we will benignly condescend. But he will be grateful for being there, and for not having received what he deserved," just as "we will all be grateful for being there and for not having received what we deserve."

The Mishnah's view, set down approximately at the time Paul wrote his Letter to the Romans, could not be more different, explicitly singling out specific wicked men in biblical history who will never by saved. And unlike Lewis, the rabbis seem utterly unperturbed that some are eternally damned; for, unlike Neuhaus, the rabbis quite strongly believed that we go to heaven precisely because we *deserve* to be there. One of the most fascinating differences between Judaism and Christianity is that while both faiths believe in heaven, only Judaism speaks of one's eternal reward as a *chelek*, a portion. For instance: "Jeroboam has no portion in the World to Come." The rabbis saw the afterlife as a function of one's spiritual savings account, in which the extent of one's experience of the divine presence is determined by the value of the good deeds that he or she has accumulated in life.

This does not mean that the rabbis believed that those with few virtues were eternally damned. The sages believed in a form of purgatory, where those with more sins than good deeds were sent. Damnation was reserved for the frightfully wicked.

Jewish intolerance for the wicked is made most manifest in Maimonides' interpretation of damnation. In his view souls are never eternally punished in hell: the presence of the truly wicked is so intolerable to the Almighty that they never even experience an afterlife. Rather, they are, in the words of the Bible, "cut off": after death, they just . . . disappear.

The Protestant theologian Harvey Cox, who is married to a Jew, wrote a book on his impressions of Jewish ritual. Cox describes the Jewish holiday of Purim, on which the defeat of Haman is celebrated by the reading of the book of Esther. Enamored with the biblical story, Cox enjoys the tale until the end, where, as noted above, Esther wreaks vengeance upon her enemies.

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Like Sister Johanna, he is disturbed by Jewish hatred. It cannot be a coincidence, he argues, that precisely on Purim a Jew by the name of Baruch Goldstein murdered twenty innocent Muslims engaged in prayer in Hebron.

There is something to Cox's remarks. The danger inherent in hatred is that it must be very limited, directed only at the most evil and unrepentant. According to the Talmud, the angels began singing a song of triumph upon the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt until God interrupted them: "My creatures are drowning, and you wish to sing a song?" Yet the rabbis also state that God wreaked further vengeance upon Pharoah himself, ordering the sea to spit him out, so that he could return to Egypt alone, without his army. Apparently one must cross some terrible moral boundary in order to be a justified target of God's hatred—and of ours. An Israeli mother is right to raise her child to hate Saddam Hussein, but she would fail as a parent if she taught him to despise every Arab. We who hate must be wary lest we, like Goldstein, become like those we are taught to despise.

Another danger inherent in hate is that we may misdirect our odium at institutions in the present because of their past misdeeds. For instance, some of my coreligionists reserve special abhorrence for anything German, even though Germany is currently one of the most pro-Israel countries in Europe. Similarly, after centuries of suffering, many Jews have, in my own experience, continued to despise religious Christians, even though it is secularists and Islamists who threaten them today, and Christians should really be seen as their natural allies. Many Jewish intellectuals and others of influence still take every assertion of the truth of Christianity as an anti-Semitic attack. After the Catholic Church beatified Edith Stein, a Jewish convert to Christianity, some prominent Jews asserted that the Church was attempting to cover up its role in causing the Holocaust. And then there is the historian Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, who essentially has asserted that any attempt by the Catholic Church to maintain that Christianity is the one true faith marks a continuation of the crimes of the Church in the past.

Burning hatred, once kindled, is difficult to extinguish; but that is precisely what Jews must do when reassessing our relationship with contemporary Christianity. The crimes of popes of the past do not negate the fact that John Paul II is one of the righteous men of our generation. If Christians no longer hold us accountable for the crime of deicide, we cannot remain indifferent to such changes. Christians have every right to assert the truth of their beliefs. Modern anti-Christianity is no more excusable than ancient anti-Semitism.

Yet neither does this mean that hate is always wrong, nor that Esther's actions were unnecessary. The rabbis of the Talmud were bothered by a contradiction: the book of Kings describes Saul as killing every Amalekite, and yet Haman, according to his pedigree in the book of Esther, was an Agagite, a descendant of the Amalekite king. The Talmud offers an instructive solution: after Saul had killed every Amalekite, he experienced a moment of mercy, and wrongly refrained from killing King Agag. This allowed Agag a window of opportunity; he had several minutes before he was killed by the angry Samuel. In those precious moments, Agag engaged in relations with a random woman, and his progeny lived on to threaten the Jews in the future. The message is that hate allows us to keep our guard up, to protect us. When we are facing those who seek nothing but our destruction, our hate reminds us who we are dealing with. When hate is appropriate, then it is not only virtuous, but essential for Jewish well-being.

Archbishop Tutu, who, as indicated above, preaches the importance of forgiveness towards Nazis, has, of late, become one of Israel's most vocal critics, demanding that other countries enact sanctions against the Jewish state. Perhaps he would have Israelis adopt an attitude of forgiveness towards those who have sworn to destroy the only democracy in the Middle East. Yet forgiveness is precisely what the Israeli government attempted ten years ago, when it argued that the time had come to forget the unspeakable actions of a particular individual, and to recognize him as the future leader of a Palestinian state. Many Jews, however, seething with hatred for this man, felt that it was the Israeli leaders who "knew not what they were doing."

At the time, my grandfather, a rabbi, joined those on the Israeli right in condemning the Oslo process, arguing that it would produce a terrorist state responsible for hundreds of Israeli deaths. As a rabbinical student, I could not understand my grandfather's unremitting opposition. He was, I thought, so blinded by his hate that he was unable to comprehend the powerful potential of the peace process. Now, many hundreds of Jewish victims of suicide bombings later, and fifty years after the Holocaust, the importance and the necessity of Jewish hate has once again been demonstrated. Perhaps there will soon be peace in the Middle East, perhaps not. But one thing is certain: we will not soon forgive the actions of a man who, as he sent children to kill children, knew—all too well—just what he was doing. We will not—we cannot—ask God to have mercy upon him. Those Israeli parents whose boys and girls did not come home will pray for the destiny of his soul at the conclusion of their holiest day, but their prayer will be rather different from the rosary:

Let the terrorist die unshriven.
Let him go to hell.
Sooner a fly to God than he. FT

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Books In Review

Postmodern Chutney

Step Across This Line: Collected Nonfiction 1992-2002. By Salman Rushdie. *Random House. 402 pp. $25.95.*

***Reviewed by* Randy Boyagoda**

Joseph Conrad prefaced one of his novels by announcing that the task of a writer is, "by the power of the written word, to make you hear, to make you feel—it is, before all, to make you *see*!" Here is Salman Rushdie on *The Wizard of Oz*: "Imagination puts us in the Lion's skin, places the sparkling slippers on our feet, sends us cackling through the air on a broomstick." And here is Salman Rushdie on September 11: "It was an iconoclastic act, in which the defining icons of the modern, the world-shrinking airplanes and those soaring secular cathedrals, the tall buildings, were rammed into in order to send a message: that the modern world itself was the enemy, and would be destroyed." Rushdie's greatest strength as a novelist is his most serious flaw as a cultural critic: he has given us a collection so beautifully written, there seems to be little distinction between flying broomsticks and world-shrinking airplanes.

Initially, the range of topics covered in these essays, reviews, lectures, and meditations impresses us with the breadth of Rushdie's knowledge: he moves with ease from contemporary Lebanese novelists to sixteenth-century Indian epic literature, from Vaclav Havel to Bob Dylan. The exuberance with which he engages every topic attests to the wonders he can accomplish with his prose. Rushdie deserves a place alongside Nabokov, Joyce, and Conrad as a pyrotechnic master of twentieth-century English, and one happily cannonades through many of these pieces. But his gifted prose is, unfortunately, also his curse. Rushdie is a paragon of the postmodern mindset; as engaged by Dorothy in Oz as by destruction in lower Manhattan, he is willing and able to pass between cultural registers and diverse subjects with an insouciant disregard for the relative value of the insights offered, the consistency of his arguments, or the durability of his commitments.

This flaw is related to the dominant theme of *Step Across This Line*, which also happens to be a key premise of Rushdie's fiction and a sad tenet of our age: freedom means freedom from any form of limitation on how we live in this world (or what we write about). Barriers are to be overcome, borders to be transgressed, rules broken, all in support of the sacrosanct notion of the individual liberated from the tyranny of religious and political authority. A profound flattening of meaning results when such notions dominate an essay collection, strangely made apparent by the uniformly intense beauty of the language. This problem is most evident in the February 2002 Yale lectures Rushdie delivered on freedom, art, and responding to September 11, which provide the collection with its title and comprise its fourth section. Their confusing roster of frontier metaphors are marked by gorgeous language, but the lectures leave us confused as to what and where frontiers exist, how we are to respond to them, and why.

Reviewing a mediocre mid-career work by Ernest Hemingway, Lionel Trilling once suggested that its flaws were the result of Hemingway being overburdened by the persona foisted onto him by fame. Trilling explained the problem as Hemingway attempting to write as "Hemingway," which understandably resulted in an unintentional parody of his work—the writer seeking to project the image he mistook for his true self. Rushdie has certainly faced this problem for some time, but to his credit, he is aware of it. Halfway through one of the strongest pieces in the collection, a travelogue of his first trip to India in twelve years, Rushdie remarks, "My metamorphosis from observer to observed, from the Salman I know to the 'Rushdie' I often barely recognize, continues apace."

"Rushdie," for instance, is recognized by a journalist in a restaurant. When word gets out that he spoke to reporters, he is accused by the police of trying to instigate a riot in Delhi by drawing attention to himself, and then preemptively blamed for any police violence if a riot should occur. On one level, this is absurdist comedy, on another, a reflection of how unsettling the "Rushdie affair" was, and continues to be. After Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini issued a *fatwa* against Rushdie for blaspheming Islam in his 1987 novel *The Satanic Verses*, "Rushdie" became the watchword for free speech and the writer's ability to affect history, and his reputation as a novelist became inextricably entangled with his political predicament. Indeed, when Rushdie writes of young Elián González becoming a political football, in one of the reprints of *New York Times* columns that make up the third section of the collection, the restrained but bitter emotion that marks the piece suggests that he understands the experience in a direct way.

The second of the volume's four sections is a selection of Rushdie's various statements on the *fatwa* and its consequences—his forced seclusion, the at times fatal violence directed towards translators and colleagues, the sour undercurrents in British sympathy towards his situation, his devotion to free speech at any cost.

Randy Boyagoda *is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of English at Boston University.*

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While it's impossible not to deplore the entire mess and admire his courage, Rushdie's arrogant, dismissive treatment of religion is at times frustrating and—truth be told—explains in part the anger he generated. Rushdie is defiantly a secular humanist, convinced that religion's only interest lies in a power-driven, ideological control of believers. Addressing a conference on free speech in Washington in 1992, Rushdie follows John Stuart Mill in citing Socrates and Christ as men accused of blasphemy and heresy, founders of Western traditions in spite of persecution. He then announces: "We can say, therefore, that blasphemy and heresy, far from being the greatest evils, are methods by which human thought has made its most vital advances." The autobiographical elements of this, and many other pieces in section two, are clear; also unmistakable are the overblown terms he uses to imply his apparent achievements, which limit our appreciation for his resilience.

The best I can say about Rushdie on religion is that he's at least consistent in his denunciations. Elsewhere, his ability to commit himself to membership in various groups is confusing, and when these pieces are read together, a tad unsettling. Over the course of the collection, Rushdie is a Muslim, Indian, New Yorker, Briton, European, American, trans-nationalist, post-nationalist, internationalist, immigrant, exile, emigrant, migrant. In each case, he writes in the first-person plural. Perplexities arise, especially regarding September 11 and its aftermath. In September 2001, responding to the terrorist attacks on "our city," he announces that "we must send our shadow-warriors against theirs, and hope that ours prevail." Two months later, adopting a Muslim perspective on Islamic terrorism, he declares, "We say that the ills of our societies are not primarily America's fault—that we are to blame for our own failings." The effect of these multiple, often contradictory affiliations is dizzying. Rushdie has defended this apparent inconsistency as the mark of a postmodern, postcolonial, globalized world, in which no one belongs to unitary categories of definition, and all are partial, fragmentary selves.

This point has some force in his mongrel fictions, where not seeming to belong to anywhere, anything, or anyone is, understandably, painful. In a cultural commentator, however, the ability to experience the world from a variety of flitting positions leads to inevitable contradictions that in turn call into question the value and depth of the writer's convictions. In a *Times* column, he correctly castigates the white-gloved left for its flagellation of America since September 11 as "sanctimonious moral relativism" and "appalling rubbish." But he adds a smug footnote to the book version, explaining that "I failed to foresee the eagerness with which Messrs. Ashcroft, Ridge, et al. would set about creating the apparatus of a more authoritarian state." Without blinking, Rushdie manages to chide the chattering classes, then rejoin their ranks.

AGAINST THESE LIMITATIONS, his collection has many strengths. His essay on *The Wizard of Oz* and his Indian travelogue are gorgeously written and full of sincere feeling. Moreover, besides George Steiner and Harold Bloom, Rushdie is perhaps the most expansive reader writing today. In a lecture entitled "On Influence," he runs through Calvino, Melville, Kleist, Conrad, Cervantes, and Kafka in one paragraph. His facility in moving through such an epic list is far too convincing to seem merely showy. In another piece, he makes an impassioned and welcome plea for a return to judgment in evaluating novels; he also humorously cautions us to "beware the writer who sets himself or herself up as the voice of a nation. This includes the nations of race, gender, sexual affiliation, elective affinity. This is the New Behalfism. Beware behalfies!" And he's solid on the danger of "skating around this issue" of violence justified by religion in India by "speaking of religion in the fashionable language of 'respect.'" But his solution is infuriating in its logical

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leaps: "What happened in India, happened in God's name. The problem's name is God."

Too often, Rushdie provides the correct diagnosis but prescribes the wrong medicine. One reason, I think, is his voracious interests. Independent films, Princess Diana, censorship, terrorism, the BBC, hip-hop music, American politics, soccer, Kashmir, Apple Computer ads—nothing is outside his purview. In Rushdie's wonderful 1981 novel *Midnight's Children*, the production of chutney was the central metaphor for explaining the protagonist's raucous experience of Indian history. Anything and everything goes into the chutney pot; a pungent, tasty mixture comes out. *Step Across This Line* is Rushdie's latest chutney; it produces an unfortunate indigestion in the reader who looks to an essay collection for different sustenance than a novel. We require a certain reflective stance from a writer to whom we turn for direction, a detachment rendered impossible by the near-synchronicity of event and response that characterizes so many of these pieces. The critic must be delicately part of the world he reveals, not onstage with U2 one moment and writing about it the next.

Complaining about the profound dulling of our critical faculties by a sensation-driven media culture, Rushdie suggests that if news commentators "were less eager to spin the news the moment it happens until it becomes a dazzling hypnotic blur, we might see more clearly." I agree and add that we turn to the best voices of our age to help us see more clearly, to see beyond the daily glut of infotainment. Had Rushdie himself stepped back, reflected more patiently on the various events that this collection chronicles, and sought a greater consistency to his underlying convictions before attempting to direct our course, he would seem less a reflection of the world's confused beauties, his collection less a dazzling, hypnotic blur.

Tinkering with Christianity

THE PURITAN AS YANKEE: A LIFE OF HORACE BUSHNELL. By ROBERT BRUCE MULLIN. *Eerdmans. 296 pp. $21.*

***Reviewed by* George McKenna**

THE NAME OF Horace Bushnell (1802-1876) was so well known in nineteenth-century America that when residents of Hartford, Connecticut, visited other cities they were often greeted with, "Do you know Horace Bushnell?" Bushnell, pastor of Hartford's Congregational North Church from 1833 to 1859, was a towering figure in mainline Protestantism at a time when it played a central role in shaping American culture. Yet today, outside the field of American religious history, few Americans would recognize the name. This is not simply because Americans have lost track of their cultural heritage. Bushnell was a contemporary of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Theodore Parker, and Orestes Brownson, who, like Bushnell, were central figures in American religion, and those names still register at least some response.

Why has Bushnell become so obscure? In reading Robert Bruce Mullin's biography of Bushnell, *The Puritan as Yankee*, we find some clues to an answer, and, more importantly, get a panoramic glimpse of American Protestantism during a period of rapid transition. Mullin's is the latest of many Bushnell biographies since the first, by his daughter, Mary Bushnell Cheney, in 1880. Robert L. Edwards' 1992 biography is perhaps the most readable of them, but Mullin's serviceable prose does a better job of helping us see the unifying themes in Bushnell's life and work.

GEORGE MCKENNA *is Professor of Political Science at City College of New York and coeditor of* Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Political Issues *(2003).*

His title sums up Mullin's characterization of Bushnell's lifetime project: to preserve Puritan core beliefs while reworking them to make them more palatable to the liberal heirs of Puritanism, particularly the Unitarians. A recurring trope in the book is Bushnell as Yankee "tinkerer." The label applies quite literally to Bushnell, who held two U.S. patents on home heating devices, entered into contemporary debates on the best means of ship propulsion, and inspired the creation of Hartford's city park (now Bushnell Park).

But what most interests Mullin is the kind of doctrinal tinkering Bushnell did with the mainline Protestantism of his time and place. Orthodox Calvinists, who held to the central doctrines of Reformed Christianity—predestination, God's inscrutability, man's depravity—were bat-

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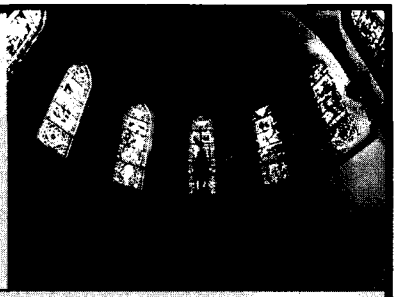
tling the Unitarians, who rejected not only these hard and perhaps harsh inflections of Christian doctrine but also essential elements of orthodox Christian belief. Then there were evangelicals, Baptists and Methodists mainly, whose doctrines could be Calvinist or Arminian, but who were mainly distinguished by their emphasis on the "conversion experience," the dramatic, emotional moment when the sinner becomes a Christian. Finally, there was a renewed interest in Anglicanism, renamed Episcopalianism, which was becoming fashionable among the upward-bound.



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Bushnell had little use for Anglicanism, which he considered reactionary and un-American, but among other sects he hoped to find some common ground. Unfortunately for Bushnell, his way of seeking commonality was not appreciated by some prominent Congregationalists, who charged him with heresy. In 1849 he was tried before the Hartford Central Association of Ministers, and, though acquitted by an overwhelming majority, was all but shunned by other Congregationalist ministers in Connecticut, who wouldn't let him preach at their churches. Only in his later years, when doctrinal differences no longer excited much passion among Congregationalists, was he readmitted to full fellowship.

WHAT GOT HIM into trouble was a book he published at the beginning of 1849, *God in Christ*. In the book it was apparent that Bushnell's method of bridging doctrinal differences was to denigrate all doctrine. Bushnell regarded "dogma" as the enemy of religion. It crept into Christianity by way of "Greek learning" ("Nothing met the Greek mind which was not doctrine") and ossified it, turning it into a collection of sterile formulas and definitions. A person of true genius, Bushnell suggested, understands that definitions can never be hard and fast. Only an "uninspired, unfructifying logicker" insists on definitional precision and logical consistency.

Years earlier, Mullin notes, Bushnell had discovered the work of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and from that point, much of what he wrote paralleled the great Romantic poet's dismissal of "reason" for a broader, faith-based "understanding." By the end of *God in Christ* Bushnell was suggesting that religion can't be presented "in the form of logic or in speculative propositions" because it is inherently "poetic, addressing itself to the imagination, in distinction from the understanding . . . a matter of feeling, addressing itself to the esthetic power

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in the soul." Not that he wanted "to abolish all our platforms and articles, and embrace every person who pretends to be a disciple." All he wanted was "to relax, in a gradual manner, the exact and literal interpretation of our standards; to lean more and more . . . towards the side of accommodation, or easy construction."

To many of the orthodox, Bushnell's "accommodation" and "easy construction" sounded very much like an anything-goes approach to theology, and despite his assurance that "'unity of the Spirit' will suffice, without any human formulas, to preserve the purity of the church," his ecumenical project ended in failure. Mullin notes that "Unitarianism and orthodoxy were no closer now than they had been before, and the orthodox seemed even more divided than they had been."

In terms of doctrine, Mullin's characterization of Bushnell as a "Puritan" seems inappropriate. The original Puritans, the preachers and teachers of old New England, would never have dismissed doctrine as unimportant or "unfructifying." The Puritans entered into very intense arguments over doctrine, convinced, as they were, that their very salvation depended on getting it right. Not one of them would ever characterize religion as primarily "a matter of feeling." Jonathan Edwards, whom some consider to be an eighteenth-century Puritan, did have a place for "religious affections," but Edwards argued his case systematically, combining Lockean epistemology and Pauline soteriology. We can agree or disagree with Edwards but at least we have an argument in front of us. With Bushnell we get what Mullin, after struggling at length to find some clarity in one of his treatises, ends up calling a "gospel of opaqueness."

AFTER HIS FAILED attempt at ecumenism, and in declining health, Bushnell embarked upon a series of restorative travels. He spent the winter of 1856-57 in California, where he enjoyed the climate but deplored the "barbarism" of the region. Whatever his doctrinal departures from orthodox Puritanism, there remained some psychological remnant of it in his temperament: he was horrified by lawlessness and disorder. Years earlier he had preached against "the law of the bowie knife" in the old Southwest; now, in his "Sermon for California," he declared that Californians could either continue down the path of lawlessness or adopt a set of values that stressed community, education, law, and industry.

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"Like John Winthrop on the *Arbella* in Boston harbor 224 years earlier," Mullin writes, "Bushnell offered a choice. Which would they follow?"

The California trip seemed to mark a turning point in Bushnell's life. Over the next decade his passion for order and moral authority began moving him in an increasingly conservative direction. He hated slavery but was put off by the "indiscriminate raving" of abolitionists. He entertained dreams of gradual emancipation (prompting Mullin to sarcasm: "It required no revolution or sacrifice, just a bit of tinkering"). When the Civil War came, Bushnell became an ardent supporter of Lincoln, but on the basis of a rather different social philosophy. For Lincoln, the Declaration of Independence was America's grand moral charter, but Bushnell regarded it as a dangerously abstract document whose logical outcome was John C. Calhoun's doctrine of nullification.

By the war's end he had begun to envisage the nation in organic terms, emphasizing the importance of loyalty and "public devotion." Bushnell's accommodationist, "easy" brand of Christianity, which seemed so controversially liberal in his 1849 book, was now pretty tame stuff. The cultural changes that had swept over liberal Protestantism in the 1860s, which included the influences of Darwin and the German "historical" schools, recalibrated the scale of "right" to "left" among the heirs of Puritanism. The center had moved left, and the left, represented by Unitarianism, had moved to a point where it was no longer Christian in any particular sense.

Bushnell's theology, which once pushed the envelope of liberal Protestantism, no longer created much controversy. In any case, what worried him most now was not "dogma" but the increasing egalitarianism of American society, or at least certain forms of it. One of his last books was entitled *Women's Suffrage: The Reform Against Nature.* Bushnell favored women's higher education and participation in professions such as medicine and law (though he insisted that a woman should not be a trial lawyer because "she is not wicked enough"). But only the abstract individualism of the Enlightenment—the same doctrine that he had earlier attributed to Jefferson and Calhoun—could have led anyone to think that a woman, born for nurturing and love, could belong in the vulgar world of politics.

AT HIS DEATH Bushnell was remembered not for these cranky social views but for his contribution to the liberalization of American Protestantism. His early attempt to tinker with orthodoxy just enough to get it in line with liberalism was now more or less irrelevant. The liberalism of 1849 had moved too far by 1876 to be reconciled with any kind of orthodoxy. So it was largely for his negative work of discrediting the latter for which he was hailed. Mullin regards Bushnell as something of a pioneer "who opened the wilderness, but left few lasting physical marks," leaving it for later generations to "replace the rude cabins and mud trails . . . with fine buildings and great highways."

It is an odd simile, and not very flattering. People who dedicate their lives to preaching and writing generally hope to leave behind more than "rude cabins and mud trails." As for those later "fine buildings" of liberal Protestantism, where are they now? "Great highways," indeed, there were, but people travel highways to arrive someplace. Where did liberal Protestantism go, and did it ever arrive?

Whether or not these questions can ever be answered, they do suggest an answer to the question I posed at the beginning: Why is it that we are more likely to recognize the names of Emerson, Parker, and Brownson than that of Bushnell? One of the reasons we remember Emerson and Parker is that they finally arrived: they converted from Christianity into a pantheistic religion of "nature." So, in the opposite direction, did Brownson when he converted from Transcendentalism to Catholicism. But Bushnell rode the mainstream, even a little ahead of it at first, until, in the end, it moved too fast for him. The pioneer was left in the wilderness.

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The Jurisprudence of Abortion

NATURAL RIGHTS & THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE. By HADLEY ARKES. *Cambridge University Press. 302 pp. $28.*

Reviewed by **David M. Smolin**

THE ANTI-ABORTION MOVEMENT has been struggling since 1992, when the Supreme Court reaffirmed *Roe v. Wade* and the country elected a President who supported abortion rights. These combined events broke the heart of a movement that had seemed on the verge of eliminating the unrestricted abortion license and returning the issue to the legislative arena. What does a movement do when even its intermediary goals become unattainable? With the majority of Supreme Court Justices and the new President strongly committed to abortion rights, the anti-abortion movement appeared doomed to irrelevance.

Hadley Arkes' new book, *Natural Rights & the Right to Choose*, can be seen as an account of these wilderness years of the anti-abortion movement. The book combines Professor Arkes' political philosophy of natural rights with memoir-like accounts of the politics of abortion during these years. It offers an account of the jurisprudence and politics of abortion from the perspective of a political philosopher committed to a highly principled and reason-based theory of natural rights.

The juxtaposition of Prof. Arkes' political philosophy with the jurisprudence and politics of abortion is occasionally jarring. While his political philosophy is immersed in rational argumentation and claims of universal principle, the jurisprudence and politics of abortion is, by contrast, characterized by irrational assertions, the distortion of scientific and medical facts, short-term political concerns, and clashing claims of liberty and equality. It is no wonder that Arkes is horrified by what he finds. He could hardly have picked a world more contrary to his own principles.

Arkes believes in a rational discourse that can enumerate and build upon universal first principles. He associates his own views with those of the Declaration of Independence, the Founders, and Lincoln's antislavery views. His theory of "natural rights" is premised on natural law,

DAVID M. SMOLIN *is Professor of Law at Cumberland Law School, Samford University.*

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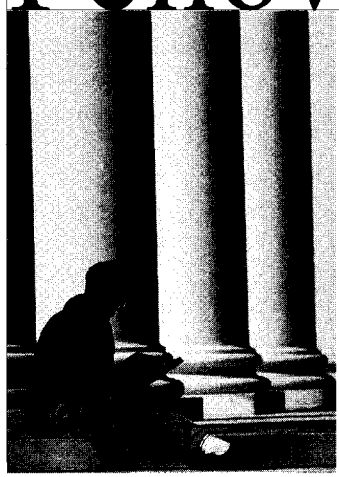

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and hence views rights from the perspective of a fundamental moral framework. It is a classical American theory, filled with confidence in the capacity of the human mind to discern fundamental principles, apply them to contemporary circumstances, and act accordingly.

Arkes emphasizes the difference between his own theory of natural rights and the one to which abortion rights advocates appeal. He does so in order to argue that the American Republic is imperiled by a philosophical fall from reason. His argument is not merely about the substance of the abortion debate, but rather about argument itself, and particularly about the lack of faith in reason among most contemporary politicians, judges, and academics, whether liberal or conservative, pro-life or pro-choice. Arkes' claim is therefore that the decline of the pro-life cause signifies a deeper decline from the fundamental political principles of the nation.

It is unfortunately typical of contemporary political movements to suggest that the fate of the Republic rests on the success or failure of their movement. Both sides in the abortion debate tend to argue in these terms, although the relative success of the abortion rights movement mutes their sporadic attempts to invoke such a crisis. For the pro-life movement, it has been common to compare its cause to that of the antislavery and civil rights movements. Arkes does so himself, frequently invoking Lincoln's antislavery rhetoric. In these ways, Arkes' book is not merely an account of abortion politics, but is itself a typical reflection of that politics.

YET ARKES IS NOT merely another pro-life activist lamenting abortion rights victories. He is also an individual deeply committed to a belief in a reason-based political philosophy, quite apart from his views on abortion. Indeed, it is necessary to his own theory that he be committed above all to first principles, prior to their immediate political or policy applications. Arkes, in short, really believes his own "sky is falling" rhetoric, and not merely because his preferred cause is on the political ropes.

Of course Arkes is correct that any theory of "rights" filled with as much irrationality, deception, and self-contradiction as that employed in defense of partial-birth abortion will be unreliable for defending liberty. It could be hoped that even many abortion rights advocates would not find much inspiration in their movement's response to partial-birth abortion, or infanticide consequent to attempted abortion. Pointing to logical holes in the politics and jurisprudence of partial-birth abortion advocacy is almost too easy, particularly for a skilled analyst like Arkes.

The difficulty is not that Arkes has aimed at a straw man, because unfortunately abortion rights judges, politicians, academics, and activists have indeed sometimes sunk to the low levels of discourse he describes. Rather, Arkes' juxtapositions between rational natural rights theory and irrational abortion politics, and between the philosophical heights of the Founders and the calculated pragmatism of today, raise myriad questions.

One group of questions arises from his appeal to a golden age of reason, civility, and morality. Why, for example, if the Founders were such exemplars of reason and moral clarity, did they compromise on slavery? If Lincoln so clearly won the argument on race through simple, rational argu-

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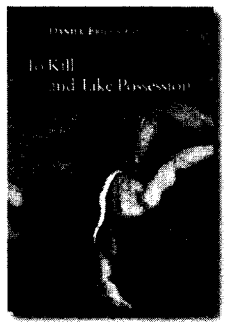

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mentation, why did the nation so quickly regress after the Civil War to a system of white supremacy and segregation? If jurisprudence was so clearly superior at the founding, and indeed before the modern era of moral relativism, then why are so many judicial opinions of earlier eras filled with logical flaws and result-oriented pragmatism? It may be fallacious, in other words, to compare the best of the past—the Declaration of Independence and Lincoln—to the worst of the present.

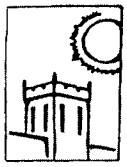
A further set of difficulties follows from Arkes' juxtaposition of evil theories of relativism and skepticism, which produce social evils such as slavery and abortion, to good theories of natural law and natural rights, which are apparently supposed to produce goods such as abolition and protection for the weak and defenseless. Take, for example, Arkes' identification of Senator Stephen Douglas' relativism with the essence of the proslavery position. While Arkes' portrayal of the proslavery position as based on moral relativism advances his argument, it ignores the fact that between 1830 and 1860 the South was awash in numerous natural law/natural rights theories that viewed slavery and white supremacy as consistent with both nature and nature's God. It is typical of natural law theorists that they see evil emanating from skepticism, while it is typical of skeptics that they see evil emanating from absolutes. Both can point to their own historical and contemporary examples.

THESE DIFFICULTIES do not undermine Arkes' critique of the worst of abortion rights advocacy and the presumptuous relativism current among modern elites. These difficulties do, however, undermine his claims that things today are really worse, in every fundamental way, than they were in the past. Doubtless, *some* things are worse than they used to be, and the legal regime of near-absolute abortion rights is one of those. However, some things are in fact better than they were for most of American history—such as, for example, the treatment of racial and religious minorities within the United States.

Even if Arkes could demonstrate that prior generations wore their certitudes on their sleeves (while suppressing their self-interest), and that the current generation flaunts its skepticism and self-interest (while hiding its certitudes, perhaps even from itself), it would not prove that the Republic has undergone a fundamental decline. We are skeptical today of self-evident truths in part because they have so often been abused and misapplied. We are skeptical of reason because we are more keenly aware of how our self-interest distorts and limits our reason and perception. Perhaps, instead of having undergone a decline, we have become somewhat more modest in our willingness to make certain kinds of grand claims for our (often self-interested) positions. Or perhaps some have merely recast certitude into a different language, the (unfortunately impoverished) ideological languages of the political right and left.

One can hope, with Prof. Arkes, for a return to America's traditional natural law/natural rights discourse, while also recognizing that such a return would pose dangers of its own. Human beings have innumerable ways to distort the truth. Even if we immediately restored the preeminence of natural rights/natural law discourse to our national jurisprudence and politics, abortion rights activists would still find ways of justifying the abortion right in that mode of discourse, just as prior generations justified the enslavement of African Americans through invoking God, the nature of things, and the Bible.

No one movement, then, has the right to declare the Fall of America or the death of the Founders' vision. Indeed, the American experiment has grown to the point where our relatively young nation is of vital significance to the entire world. The meaning of America has become the world's concern, and those who focus only on a single issue like abortion may miss participating in other, deeply important matters.



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An anti-abortion movement that wishes to equate itself with the anti-slavery movement of another day must learn history's lesson of patience. It must also take careful note of the crucial differences between slavery and abortion. Slavery and race divided the nation geographically and concerned deeply entrenched economic interests. Abolitionism failed as a political cause, and only the unintended consequences of regional secession ended slavery. In contrast, abortion engages deeply rooted cultural issues concerning sexuality, family, and gender. Although abortion rates and attitudes vary geographically, we can expect no fundamental geographic division and no literal civil war to resolve the issue. We are unlikely to get abortion right until we come closer to getting things right on broader matters of culture. This promises to be a long struggle, with no immediate prospect for success. The political pro-life movement kept its nerve during its decade of defeat, and it is no time now for that movement to be digging joint graves for the nation and itself.

Buber's Middle Way

THE MARTIN BUBER READER: ESSENTIAL WRITINGS. Edited by ASHER BIEMANN. *Palgrave. 303 pp. $18.95 paper.*

***Reviewed by* Leora Batnitzky**

THE 1920s AND '30s were a time of intense intellectual ferment in Germany. Radical questioning was the order of the day in every domain of thought, including religion. Take, for example, the uncompromising debate that took place between the young Leo Strauss and Julius Guttmann, a student of the great neo-Kantian philosopher Hermann Cohen and author of the formidable *Philosophy of Judaism* (1933). In his early work of 1935, *Philosophy and Law*, Strauss criticized Guttmann's attempt to understand Jewish philosophy as an aspect of "culture" rather than "law." For Strauss, Guttmann's attempt to assimilate Jewish thought to culture showed him to have bought in to questionable liberal presuppositions about the common cultural roots of philosophy and revelation, which, even at this early stage of his career, Strauss insisted on keeping sharply distinct from one another. Against Guttmann's liberal (and liberalizing) view, Strauss contrasted the thought of medieval Islamic and Jewish philosophers who understood religion neither as a "field of validity," nor as a subjective "turn of consciousness," nor, least of all, as a "field of culture." Rather, the medievals never wavered in grounding religion in divinely ordained *law*.

Martin Buber, another major figure to emerge from the tumultuous interwar years in Germany, is often thought to be, like Strauss, a critic of the cultural and political assumptions of the "scientific study of Judaism." Yet viewed against the background of the stark alternatives proposed in Strauss' book, Buber appears to be much closer to liberal German-Jewish thought than many of his subsequent interpreters, and perhaps even Buber himself, have recognized. As the essays collected in the *Martin Buber Reader* clearly show, Buber's central preoccupation in his remarkably broad and vast writings was the modern meaning of religion, defined precisely as (to use Strauss' description of Guttmann's position) a field of culture that is marked by a "turn of consciousness." Strauss' uncompromising critique of Guttmann thus provides a useful way of thinking about and evaluating the essential ideas in Buber's "essential writings."

Buber's rejection of the authority of Jewish law is most famously memo-

LEORA BATNITZKY *is Assistant Professor of Religion at Princeton University.*

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rialized in his 1924 debate with Franz Rosenzweig on the topic. Unfortunately, the debate is not included in this collection, but it does contain a lesser-known, and perhaps more telling, discussion of the Ten Commandments. In this text, Buber asks: In what sense can the commandments be thought of as laws? His reply is that they are not laws in an ordinary sense at all. As Buber writes,

> The Ten Commandments are not part of an impersonal codex governing an association of men. They are uttered by an *I* and addressed to a *Thou*. They begin with the *I* and every one of them addresses the *Thou* in person. An *I* "commands" and a *Thou*—every *Thou* who hears this *Thou*—"is commanded." . . . The word does not enforce its own hearing. Whoever does not wish to respond to the Thou addressed to him can apparently go about his business unimpeded. The He who speaks the word has power, . . . [but] He has renounced this power of His sufficiently to let every individual actually decide for himself whether he wants to open or close his ears to the voice, and that means whether he wants to choose or reject the I of "I am."

For Buber, God is neither a lawgiver nor an enforcer of law. Rather than "an impersonal codex," the Ten Commandments represent for him the mark of a personal relationship each individual has with the divine. This relationship is marked not by God's power to enforce His laws but by the relinquishment of power by the divine for the sake of human freedom to accept or reject the divine. It is in this sense that religion properly understood (what Buber calls "religiosity") requires and culminates in a change in consciousness. "Religiosity" for Buber reflects the dynamic relationship between God and the human being in which both partners freely relinquish some of their autonomous freedom and power in order to relate to one another.

Buber's view of Jewish law is best understood as a component of the "dialogical philosophy" contained in his *I and Thou* (1923). An I-Thou relation, for Buber, is one between two subjects, neither of which is static. It

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does not serve a particular purpose, and neither is any specific content (such as a law) intrinsic to it. By contrast, religion understood as an external law, as Strauss would have it, constitutes an I-it relation, which Buber defines as one that is fundamentally instrumental in nature. I-it relations are oriented toward power because they are relations in which the subject (the "I") takes its partner (the "it") as an object. Law qua law falls into the realm of I-it relations because the law, precisely by applying to all equally, treats each of its subjects impersonally—that is, as an "it."

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THE THEMES ABOUT WHICH Buber wrote, like the contexts in which he wrote, changed considerably over the course of his life as he moved from being a leading Weimar intellectual and educator to a professor at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem active in Israeli political and cultural debates to, finally, a post-Holocaust religious thinker extremely influential in both postwar Germany and the United States. But Buber's lifelong work, while exceptionally varied and textured, also shows a striking consistency of themes. The seven parts into which Asher Biemann has divided the remarkably concise and accessible *Martin Buber Reader* clearly show this consistency as Buber discourses on topics ranging through the Bible, Hasidism, Judaism, anthropology, philosophy, Zionism, and communal identity. Just as Buber's understanding of law goes hand in hand with his philosophy of language, so Buber's emphasis on transformation through dialogue marks his views of culture and politics, both in Germany before the Holocaust and in Israel after it.

Already in his 1911 essay on "The Renewal of Judaism," Buber emphasized that a "renewal" [*Erneuerung*] of Judaism should be "something sudden and immense—by no means a continuation or an improvement, but a return [*Umkehr*] or transformation [*Umwandlung*]." Buber could thus be highly critical of Jewish liberal and rationalist approaches to culture and politics as blocking the way back to the founding myths of Jewish religiosity. Accordingly, in his translations and writings on Hasidism, Buber criticized not only what he considered the deadening effects of rabbinism on Jewish culture, but also German-Jewish liberal reformers. While Buber shared with these reformers an interest in reinvigorating the prophetic tradition, he claimed that the Reform movement remained an enterprise trapped on the surface of things. What was needed was a way to enliven the past from the inside out (through

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a transformation of our relations with others) rather than from the outside in (through the reform of Jewish law). Hence the importance of a 1916 letter to Hermann Cohen, thankfully included here, in which Buber describes Jewish Reform as being "without memory [*gedächtnislose*]."

For readers today, the term evokes Heidegger's notion of "commemoration" (*Andenken*). Just as Heidegger claimed that "commemorating" the philosophy of the pre-Socratics held the key to retrieving a non-objectified relation to the truth of Being, so Buber found a similar capacity in the lived reality of Hasidism. Buber, in fact, anticipates Heidegger's later articulation of the relation between the superficial outer forms of existence and the possibility of gaining access to the inner truth of being through commemoration or memory. As Buber put it in his 1911 essay "Judaism and the Jews," "My question is not concerned with life's outer forms but with its inner reality. . . . As for inner reality, Jewish religiosity is a *memory*, perhaps also a hope, but it is not a presence."

Buber's Zionism—in the Weimar Republic, the Jewish community in Palestine, and finally after the establishment of the State of Israel—also emphasized the transformation of the Jewish people through Zionism rather than the external securing of a homeland for Jews. Aligning himself with the cultural Zionism of Ahad Ha'am, Buber was deeply opposed to the goals and impetus of Theodor Herzl's political Zionism. Where Herzl saw Zionism as necessary because of a decay in the world in which Jews lived (anti-Semitism), Buber believed Zionism to be necessary because of a decay in Jews themselves (assimilation to modern liberal culture). Strikingly, Buber never changed his mind on the matter, even after the Nazi genocide. He continued to maintain that cultural renewal, not resistance to anti-Semitism, was the essential task of his time. Buber's "Hebrew Humanism" stood opposed to what he called Jewish "national egoism." While the latter emphasizes the "normalization" of the Jewish people in focusing on "land, . . . language, and independence," the former seeks "a concrete transformation" of the individual and the community.

At the end of the day, it is arguably Buber's optimism about the possibility of personal and communal transformation that is most characteristic of his thought. In contrast to the deep pessimism of Nietzsche and Heidegger, Buber always insisted that biblical morality, or "biblical humanism," would survive the throwing off of the externalizing shackles of liberal culture. In fact, for Buber, not only would biblical morality remain, it would be reinvigorated. Despite his criticism of liberal Jewish attempts to make Jewish life, and indeed human life as such, a servant of reason and progress, Buber shared certain convictions with the broader tradition of liberal German-Jewish thought. Buber's disdain for the authority of Jewish law, like his refusal to consider the (external) threat of anti-Semitism to the existence of the Jewish people to be the fundamental one, was rooted in his belief that humanity can begin to achieve its highest ends through a turn of consciousness. Reflecting in 1933 on the growing danger to the Jews in Germany, Buber wrote: "This stormy night, these shafts of lightning flashing down, this threat to destruction—do not escape from them into a world of logos, of perfected form! Stand fast, hear the word in the thunder, obey, respond!" By transforming ourselves from the inside out through our relations with others we could, Buber believed, avoid perhaps even the worst that history had to offer.

Buber thus implicitly denied what Strauss later called Jewish law's "deeper understanding of the power of evil in man." After the Nazi genocide, Buber wrote movingly about God's absence during the Holocaust, but he nevertheless remained faithful to his fundamental belief that dialogue with the divine could come about only through transformative human relations. What we make of Buber's philosophical, theological, and political legacy will depend, in the end, on what we make of his optimism.

Altering the Face of Humanity

Life, Liberty, and the Defense of Human Dignity: The Challenge of Bioethics. By Leon R. Kass. *Encounter. 300 pp. $26.95.*

***Reviewed by* Marc D. Guerra**

Leon Kass has described himself as a strange man who writes strange and untimely books. Given the intellectual condition of the contemporary academy, this is by no means a bad thing. Trained professionally as a physician and biochemist, Kass has, without formal academic training, taught courses in philosophy and literature for the past twenty-eight years at the University of Chicago. A prolific essayist, he has published books on the proper relation of biology and human affairs, the connection between eating and the perfection of human nature, and the deepest meanings of courtship and marriage. But the real reason why Kass seems so strange today is that he defends the dignity of our given human nature in a world that is transformed almost daily by advances in science and technology.

Life, Liberty, and the Defense of Dignity is largely a collection of reworked, previously published essays on biotechnology—one of which originally appeared in First Things ("L'Chaim

Marc D. Guerra *teaches theology at Assumption College in Worcester, Massachusetts.*

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and Its Limits: Why Not Immortality?" May 2001). In this book, the Chairman of the President's Council on Bioethics offers a penetrating and unnerving reflection on how biotechnology's growing ability to alter our nature fundamentally threatens our dignity as human beings. Biotechnology is, as Kass shows, something of a mixed blessing. It has allowed many of us to live longer and healthier lives, something Kass believes we should be most grateful for. At the same time, some emerging biotechnologies—especially in neuroscience and psychopharmacology—threaten to technologically alter the very face of our humanity. As Kass jarringly puts it in his Introduction, the burgeoning biotech revolution has already brought us to a point where "human nature itself lies on the operating table, ready for alteration, for eugenic and neuropsychic 'enhancement,' for wholesale redesign."

In Kass' view, this kind of technological enhancement and redesign ultimately will result in the flattening of our souls. By pursuing physical health as the greatest of human goods, we will inevitably end up sacrificing the moral and spiritual goods that give meaning and dignity to our lives. The degraded and dehumanized "Brave New World" of soma and Bokanovskification that Aldous Huxley so vividly described two generations ago seems closer with each passing day.

Western societies have largely been unwilling to face the all-too-human consequences of this looming posthuman future. Seduced by promises of even bigger and better biotechnologies in the years to come, we have opted not to think about what is really at stake in the biotech revolution. However, given the recent extraordinary proliferation of biotechnologies, from the completion of the Human Genome Project to our growing expertise in the science of cloning, the time has come for everyone who cares about the preservation of our humanity to recognize what is at stake. In this effort, Kass' elegantly written and thought-provoking book will undoubtedly be of much help.

Kass begins his book with a reflection on "the problem of technology and liberal democracy." The two have something of a symbiotic relationship. On the one hand, genuine technological progress presupposes the kind of intellectual and economic freedom that liberal democracy secures. On the other, liberal societies must rely upon technology for assistance in everything from supplying healthy and affordable foods, to sustaining great numbers of people, to developing new and improved military technologies. But technology also creates its own set of problems. Take the case of medical science's increased ability to push back the frontiers of death. As medical science has helped us live healthier and longer lives, our society has had to struggle to figure out how to take care of a citizenry whose longevity continually increases. Like so many other things in life, technological "progress" is not immune to the law of unintended consequences.

That we view technology as a "problem" at all shows the remarkable extent to which we have internalized modern science's mechanized and reductionist account of the world. As Kass shows, the greatest problem posed by today's "brave new biology" does not come from the technologies it produces, but rather from the scientific view from which it is derived. To understand just how deep the problem of biotechnology runs, Kass points out, it must be viewed in the larger context of the revolutionary character of modern science.

Building on the analysis of thinkers such as Leo Strauss and Hans Jonas, Kass offers a rich reflection on the "philosophical foundations" of modern science. The philosophical architects of modern natural science, such as Bacon and Descartes, believed that if science were to successfully minister to human beings' needs, it would have to alter its basic theoretical posture. Whereas ancient science tried to discover *what* things are, modern science would now focus on *how* they worked. Knowledge would be seen as desirable not for its own sake, but

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because it showed how things could be manipulated to fulfill our many desires. Consequently, modern science would effectively transform our view of nature itself. Nature could no longer be seen as "animated, purposive, and striving," but as mere "dead matter in motion," matter that could, and should, be mastered in order to bring about, in Bacon's famous phrase, "the relief of man's estate." The very idea of modern science, as Kass shows, "contains manipulability at its theoretical core."

Biotechnology is a variation on this larger scientific theme. But it is a particularly dangerous variation, since it allows for the technological manipulation of the manipulator himself. Biotechnology thus paves the way for the complete "medicalization of life and death." Armed with increased knowledge of how our genes and brains work, we are now in a position to be the subjects of our own manipulations. This is the deceptive promise lurking behind the biotech project. Through neuropharmaceuticals and germ-line therapy, we are told, we will be able to smooth out all of human nature's rough edges, thus making us completely at home in the world and with ourselves.

IF KASS' DIAGNOSIS of the problem of technology is correct, and it rings completely true to this reviewer, there is something deeply unsettling about our current situation. The problem of biotechnology is something that we are remarkably ill equipped to deal with today, if for no other reason than that we are generally unaware of the way that modern science has shaped the very way we see ourselves and the world. What Kass indirectly shows is that even such admirable defenders of human dignity as Francis Fukuyama and James Q. Wilson, who argue that the solution to the problem of biotechnology ultimately lies in enacting sound regulations, radically underestimate the true magnitude of the biotech challenge. And the same could be said about those thinkers who primarily approach the question of biotechnology from the perspective of Pope John Paul II's rich analysis of "the culture of death." As insightful and instructive as this analysis is, it too tends to see biotechnology as the source of some particularly dehumanizing practices and not as the product of an all-encompassing scientific view of the world. For liberal societies, unfortunately, there is no quick and easy solution to the "problem" of biotechnology, precisely because it is rooted in the very premises of the modern scientific project itself.

Kass believes that if we are going to confront the challenge of biotechnology seriously and effectively we will have to develop a "more natural biology and anthropology" than the one we have now. Only such a "biologically informed anthropology" can remind us of just what we have to lose through the biotechnological transformation of our humanity. Kass goes a long way in this book towards laying the groundwork for such a biology—and he here builds on some of the arguments he first made in *Towards a More Natural Science* (1985). But Kass also knows that even a biology that recognizes that human life is lived "not just physically, but psychically, socially, and spiritually" cannot address all of the challenges posed by the brave new future envisioned by biotechnology. As he shows in the book's final chapter, "The Permanent Limitations of Biology," no "purely biological" account of man will ever be able to do justice to our lived experience as human beings. There will always be "permanent limits" to what biology can tell us about our lives. The task of defending morality and human dignity and of adjudicating between the claims of the body and soul consequently will "always remain the work of a largely autonomous ethical and political science." A more natural biology may be able to tell us much about "the loves of life," but it finally cannot tell us how we should live with life's different loves.

But because he is aware of the limits of just how far biology can take us, Kass sheds a good deal of light on what is really good and dignified about human life. Indeed, as he points out in a series of chapters on such biotech practices as in vitro fer-

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tilization, organ transplantation, cloning, and euthanasia, the cultivation of human dignity actually requires us to live "with and against necessity, struggling to meet it, not to overcome it." And yet Kass is clearly no Stoic. He sees too much good in human life to accept Stoicism's claim that we should always remain somewhat detached from the world. Like Pascal and Flannery O'Connor, he thinks that a truly human life requires us to live well with necessity and enjoy those goods such as love and friendship that transcend necessity—though, in contrast to Pascal and O'Connor, there remains a tension in his thought about how these two things finally fit together.

Kass is at his best when reflecting on the two poles of human biological life, birth and death. His treatment of the "human costs" of cloning is second to none. Cutting through the too "familiar political thickets . . . of pro-life and pro-choice," he shows that the new science of cloning is emphatically not a matter of reproductive rights and technologies. Cloning would allow us to become our own creators, designing our descendants through the technological tyranny of eugenics, thus making possible a kind of evil that is even more perverse than the willful destruction of nascent human life. This is, for Kass, the "political" reason why we should ban human cloning—and he makes a strong case that our initial natural "repugnance" to cloning offers an entranceway to opening up larger questions about the overall desirability of the biotech project.

But he also suggests that what is most pernicious about cloning is that it threatens to extinguish those profound erotic longings that find their fullest expression in human coupling. For cloning is, in principle, corrosive of the natural ties that connect generations and the erotic desire to take part in an act that transcends our own finite existence. The society that condones cloning and denies "the profundity of sex," Kass argues, has already taken a giant step towards removing eros from human life altogether.

Biotech's pursuit of what Kass calls "the immortality project" similarly threatens our ability to live a dignified human life. Advances in the use of human growth hormone, stem cells, and the genetic switches that control the aging process hold out the possibility that some day we will be able to radically retard the aging process. But what will be lost if death becomes an

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increasingly rare and remote occurrence? What will happen to life when we will no longer have to wonder, in the words of the Psalmist, about "the number of our days"? Reflecting on the mysterious connection between mortality and morality, Kass argues that awareness of our mortality adds depth and weight to our lives and points to the grounds of the kind of knowing self-sacrifice that cultivates "the peculiarly human beauty of . . . virtue and moral excellence."

What temporal immortality really would allow for is the endless enjoyment of the present, a freezing of time in which we would always have the chance to enjoy the goods life has to offer. However, even if such a life becomes possible, it will not bring us real happiness. "Man longs not so much for deathlessness as for wholeness, wisdom, goodness, and godliness." This is, as Kass observes, the shared message of the wisdom expressed in Aristophanes' tale of the circle men, Socratic philosophy, and the Bible. As Kass argues, each of these longings—not just the desire for wisdom, as some of Kass' early writings suggested—points to the fact that our desire for human wholeness cannot be satisfied by any quantity of earthly life.

THIS LAST OBSERVATION points to the real reason why even the kind of biology that Kass develops is finally incapable of supplying the grounds for a wholly satisfying natural ethic. For the truth of the matter is that the type of "wholeness" that biblical religion speaks of is fundamentally different from the wholeness that comes from finding our Aristophanic other half or from the Socratic contemplation of wisdom. It is a wholeness that embraces the good of the entire person, body and soul, and that perfects—not smoothes out—the imperfections of our nature. But if this is the kind of wholeness that we really seek, we will never be truly at home in this world, no matter how well we live with necessity. As Peter Lawler has recently argued, perhaps finally only theological anthropology is capable of giving a humanly satisfying account of how we can really live well in a world where the reach of our natural desires will always exceed our grasp.

BRIEFLY NOTED

MONASTIC VISIONS: WALL PAINTINGS IN THE MONASTERY OF ST. ANTONY AT THE RED SEA. Edited by ELIZABETH S. BOLMAN. *Yale University Press. 307 pp. $65.*

St. Antony is usually regarded as the father of Christian monasticism. He was deeply involved with the disputes of Arius and a staunch defender of Athanasius and the Nicene Creed. Near Antony's cave at the Red Sea, a monastery (now Coptic) was constructed. This coffeetable book documents the cleaning and restoration of the monastery's lavishly painted walls. In all, there are fourteen essays and almost 300 plates, over 250 in color. But the essays themselves are worth the price of the volume, many times over. They cover the history of the monastery, its relationship with Muslim rulers, and the techniques employed by the team of Italian restorers, whose efforts have revealed paintings of incredible beauty. Highly recommended to those who seek greater familiarity with this relatively obscure Christian communion's history (especially after A.D. 641), its iconography, and this monastery's mission to continue in sometimes adverse situations, not the least of which is the growth of recreational tourism along the shores of the Red Sea.

— *Larry Bailey*

SPEER: THE FINAL VERDICT. By JOACHIM FEST. *Harcourt. 419 pp. $30.*

If anything can be definitive on that subject, Fest's biography of Adolf Hitler is a contender for the title, and now he has rendered a similar service with this book on Albert Speer, the architect and armaments minister who was viewed by many as being second in power only to the Führer. After he served the twenty years in Spandau prison to which he was sentenced at Nuremberg, Speer spent fifteen years in voluminous writing and incessant interviews trying to understand, and help others understand, the horror that was the Third Reich, and his part in it. Fest's "final verdict" is that Speer tried to be truthful but was utterly devoid of the moral, spiritual, and religious insights necessary to judging guilt or innocence in his own case or that of others. Like Hitler, he thought "artists" exempt from ordinary moral standards. Speer alternated between pleading that exemption and the contradictory claim that he was no more than an apolitical technocrat. After the war, he infuriated nationalists by his wholesale condemnation of the Hitler period, while pleasing others by his contention that even those in the highest circle of power, such as himself, could have had no direct knowledge of the program to exterminate Jews and other crimes against humanity. Fest explores, in a nonprurient manner, what appears to be the erotic dimension of the friendship between Hitler and Speer, which explains Speer's being allowed to get away with directly countering Hitler's orders on numerous occasions. *Speer* is a fascinating and judicious study in human character, and the lack thereof.

PROTESTANT THEOLOGY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY. By KARL BARTH. *Eerdmans. 672 pp. $45 paper.*

When Karl Barth's seminal history of the fate of liberal Protestantism in Germany was first translated into English in 1959, Barth described it as a fragment of the original work. And so it was: whereas Barth's original was comprised of twenty-nine chapters,

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the translation contained eleven. Now, thanks to Eerdmans, English-speaking readers have the whole book—and it is every bit as essential as when it first appeared. Barth is a masterful guide to the tradition that he himself had sought to overthrow in *The Epistle to the Romans*, and he intimately understands the motivation behind it—namely, the desire to find a place for Christianity in the wake of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment. In his early work, Barth gave his own explosive answer to the question of whether the German Protestant attempt to make Christianity relevant to the modern world compromised too much to it, but here he leaves such judgments up to the reader, and that is probably as it should be. Barth's history will remain essential reading for as long as the question of Christianity and/or modernity continues to preoccupy us—which is to say for quite some time.

LUTHER'S LIVES: TWO CONTEMPORARY ACCOUNTS OF MARTIN LUTHER. Translated by ELIZABETH VANDIVER, et al. *Manchester University Press (distributed by Palgrave). 408 pp. $74.95.*

The first and shorter account is by Philip Melanchthon. The second and much longer, which is here translated into English for the first time, is by Johannes Cochlaeus, a contemporary Catholic opponent of Luther. As the translators note, the Cochlaeus biography was, up until the early twentieth century, the standard source for Catholic polemicists. There is no doubt that this chronological telling, which is scrupulously accurate in its lengthy citations of Luther's writings, provides abundant grist for anti-Protestant polemics. Cochlaeus himself comes across as a learned, sometimes cranky, ecclesiastical pamphleteer who is having a hard time believing that sensible people could take seriously the patent nonsense spouted by Luther against what is, for all its admitted faults, an ecclesial and civil order constituted by God Himself. This report may be only a footnote in Reformation studies, but it is an interesting and important footnote, and one is surprised that it is only now appearing in English.

A GENERATION BETRAYED: DECONSTRUCTING CATHOLIC EDUCATION IN THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING WORLD. By EAMONN KEANE. *Hatherleigh. 316 pp. $34.95.*

It is by no means uncommon to hear Catholic parents complain that, in the religious education programs of schools and parishes, their children do not seem to learn much of anything that is recognizably Catholic. This book traces, with polemical panache, the influence on the "catechetical establishment" of the radical feminist Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza, who teaches at the Harvard Divinity School, through her "disciple" Thomas Groome, a former priest teaching at Boston College. The author contends that Fiorenza is, in fact, promoting "another religion," and the latter's amply quoted statements suggest that she gleefully agrees. There is no doubt that Fiorenza and Groome are profoundly out of sync with the Magisterium, and Keane makes a convincing case that their influence is one important reason why so many young Catholics are ignorant of what it means to believe and live as a Catholic.

OLD THUNDER: A LIFE OF HILAIRE BELLOC. By JOSEPH PEARCE. *Ignatius. 320 pp. $24.95.*

For their brilliantly contrarian and very Catholic ways, G. K. Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc were dubbed by George Bernard Shaw as "Chester-Belloc." In truth, they were not as close as Shaw, and Joseph Pearce, suggest. As a biography, *Old Thunder* is marred by an excess of admiration, but it will serve a purpose if it introduces another generation to a figure who embodied the belligerence and bravado that in the first half of the twentieth century marked some unapologetic apologists for Catholicism who refused to be intimidated by its cultured despisers.

PASTOR: A READER FOR ORDAINED MINISTRY. Edited by WILLIAM H. WILLIMON. *Abingdon. 326 pp. $25 paper.*

A judiciously selected anthology on sundry dimensions of ministry by the chaplain of Duke University. What it means to be a priest, a counselor, a preacher, an intercessor, an evangelist, and an unworthy servant aspiring to holiness. Wisdom from the ancients (Cyprian, Augustine, Chrysostom), the more recent (Fosdick, Reinhold Niebuhr, Spurgeon), and the contemporary (Hauerwas, Richard Lischer, Sam Proctor, Neuhaus)—Protestant, Catholic, liberal, conservative—and each one guaranteed to occasion pause, self-criticism, and the inspiration to assume anew the impossible possibility of Christian ministry.

CELTIC DAILY PRAYER. By the NORTHUMBRIA COMMUNITY. *HarperSanFrancisco. 826 pp. $29.95.*

The Northumbria Community is an association of "companions" around the world who have their meeting place near the Island of Lindisfarne in northern England. Centered in the Community's own adaptation of the daily office, this book is a collection of texts, old and new, for blessings, meditations, and sacramental rites. Many are of great beauty and delicacy, others veer toward the new-ageish and psycho-spiritualized. For those accustomed to classical traditions, it will seem that the Community is at times trying to reinvent the wheel, meaning

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in this case the Church at prayer. But, all in all, an interesting mix that should be welcomed by students of Christian spirituality.

IN SEARCH OF AN AMERICAN CATHOLICISM: A HISTORY OF RELIGION AND CULTURE IN TENSION. By JAY P. DOLAN. *Oxford University Press. 277 pp. $28.*

The tension between a religious tradition and the culture in which it lives is a perennial and important subject for reflection. Regrettably, Dolan quite entirely collapses the tension, as is evident in his final chapter titled, "An American Religion and a Roman Church." Although Dolan is trained as an historian, this is a tract agitating for the Americanization of Catholicism (what conservative critics refer to as AmChurch) that, as is usual with tracts, proceeds as though there are no arguments to the contrary worthy of being engaged. *In Search of an American Catholicism* is the kind of thing that gives liberalism, including liberal Catholicism, a bad name.

THOMAS GORDON SMITH: THE REBIRTH OF CLASSICAL ARCHITECTURE. By RICHARD JOHN. *Andreas Papadakis (Antique Collectors' Club, Wappingers Falls, New York; www.antiquecc.com). 136 pp. $37.50.*

Smith, of the School of Architecture at the University of Notre Dame, was in the 1970s a key figure in the postmodernist and decontexualist movements, but he has moved on, having rediscovered the imaginative richness of the classical tradition. This handsome book provides an engaging account of what he thinks architecture can again be, along with striking illustrations of his work, including private houses, civic buildings, and churches. If it is true that we are, in significant part, the spaces in which we live, Smith points to a future of greater human flourishing.

FAMILY MATTERS. By ROHATON MISTRY. *Knopf. 488 pp. $26.*

A movingly comic and sad story of a Parsi family in Bombay living through accumulated family resentments and eccentricities in an India sliding into the violence and fears of ethnic and religious rivalries. The Persian community with its Zoroastrian devotions, once part of the Bombay establishment, is now on the defensive, caught between nostalgia for the British raj and dreams of beginning anew in Canada. Mistry, a Canadian born in Bombay, vividly conveys the complexities of people living between the times, underscoring without didacticism the indispensability of family, with all its frustrations and loves, in the making and unmaking of our lives.

THE SUPREME HARMONY OF ALL: THE TRINITARIAN THEOLOGY OF JONATHAN EDWARDS. By AMY PLANTINGA PAUW. *Eerdmans. 200 pp. $22.*

It used to be lamented that the only thing undergraduates knew about Jonathan Edwards was his sermon "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." Today it is a rare undergraduate who has heard about Jonathan Edwards at all. But he remains, in the judgment of informed philosophers and theologians, one of America's brightest intellectual lights. Pauw makes a persuasive case that his trinitarian thought was developed in his earliest years and provides a conceptual framework that is essential to understanding the entirety of his work.

COMMON OBJECTS OF LOVE: MORAL REFLECTION AND THE SHAPING OF COMMUNITY. By OLIVER O'DONOVAN. *Eerdmans. 80 pp. $15.*

Three impractical essays on the practice of politics. That, in the view of the Regius Professor of Moral and Pastoral Theology at Oxford, is not a criticism. He persuasively argues that it is necessary to step back from political applications in order to explore the meaning of community, including political community, and his exploration

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begins with St. Augustine's insight that a common life begins with loves held in common. Politics understood in terms of love is, for the Christian, directed to the eternal reign of the Christ.

SEARCHING FOR GOD. By CARDINAL BASIL HUME. *Paraclete. 250 pp. $14.95 paper.*

Selected reflections of the late primate of England and abbot of Ample- forth addressed to his monks but providing a winsome and reliable guide for responding to what the Second Vatican Council called "the universal call to holiness," which includes all of us.

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THE PUBLIC SQUARE

A Continuing Survey of Religion and Public Life

Richard John Neuhaus

Boston and Other Bishops

Who brought down the Cardinal Archbishop of Boston? A survey of print and broadcast media around the country produces no dissent from the answer: Bernard Law was brought down by the agitation of lay people and priests who are regularly described as "reformers," and by determined investigative reporters who relentlessly exposed his sins of nonfeasance and malfeasance. After his fall, there were occasional expressions of regret, statements that he was a good man who let things get out of control, and even talk about Greek tragedy.

There were sobering reflections also from non-Catholics. The Reverend Peter J. Gomes, a black minister of the American Baptist Church and longtime Harvard chaplain, wrote in the *Boston Globe*: "When lawyers, the courts, and the media all seem complicit in the cycle of vengeance and blood and no closure short of decapitation seems acceptable, then we have reason to worry about the climate for justice, mercy, and charity; and Salem in 1692 seems not so far removed in moral climate from Boston in 2002." Then there are those who all along have attributed the Boston storm, and the entire scandalmongering of the past year and more, to anti-Catholicism. That view gets impressive scholarly support from Philip Jenkins' book, *The New Anti-Catholicism*, out soon from Oxford University Press.

There is no doubt that the Catholic Church has been "singled out"; that the incidence of sexual abuse in other religious communities, in public schools, and in social services is as high, and possibly higher, than it is in the priesthood. Those institutions, however, are not subjected to a sustained storm of public scandal and outrage. Some Catholics complain about the double standard; others take the targeting as a perverse compliment, remembering comedian Lenny Bruce's quip that "The Catholic Church is the church we mean when we say 'the Church.'" Outside the South, a toppled Methodist bishop or Baptist superintendent makes the news on page sixteen below the fold. Anti-Catholicism is an old and complicated story. It is, as Jenkins notes, the last respectable prejudice. Others, paraphrasing Peter De Vries, have observed that anti-Catholicism is the anti-Semitism of the cultural elites. Then there are those who claim that the targeting of the Catholic Church is not anti-Catholicism but simply reflects the fact that people expect more of the Church. That may be true in some limited instances, but as an explanation of what is happening it is, I am sorry to say, a sweet delusion.

The View from Rome

As interesting and important as such considerations undoubtedly are, at the end of the day the fact is that Cardinal Law brought down Cardinal Law. Already last April he had offered his resignation to the Pope, but it was not accepted. The approach in Rome was, and apparently still is, that bishops should stay on the job to clean up the messes for which they were largely responsible. Of course, there was also the fear that the Church would be perceived as caving under pressure from the media and, especially, from civil authorities. That concern looks very different when viewed from Rome than from New York or Boston. Of the 180-plus countries in the world, many have governments that are overtly hostile to the Church, and media that do the government's bidding. Over the centuries, the Church has contended fiercely for the freedom to govern itself (*libertas ecclesiae*), and what happened in Boston and may be happening elsewhere in this country cannot help but

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send shivers down the backs of those who were formed by that corporate memory. When the attack comes from the outside, even bad bishops are sometimes kept in place. As a demonstration of the Church's resolve. As a lesson to them that they must bear the cross of dealing with the consequences of their mistakes.

But in December the decision was made that Cardinal Law had lost his ability to govern the Archdiocese of Boston. The Cardinal concurred in that decision. It was a long time coming. Priests credibly accused of abuse were given new assignments where they could, and did, abuse again. Perhaps most damaging were public assurances by the Cardinal that every case had been addressed, which assurances were then followed by the public exposure of yet further instances of wickedness. I do not think it is true that, as his critics charge, the Cardinal intentionally lied. All who know him know him to be a man of great integrity, talent, and devotion to Christ and the Church. That cannot be gainsaid. I, for one, am among the many who pray him well with what I hope will be his continuing ministry in a position appropriate to his considerable gifts.

But he could no longer lead the Archdiocese of Boston. It is right that he stepped down. His "mistakes and shortcomings"—that is what he calls them, and I believe that is what they were—were confusedly entangled with his virtues. He was too modest in his deference to the "expert" opinion of psychologists and others who assured him that abusing priests could be safely returned to ministry. (The deeply dubious role of St. Luke's in Maryland and other treatment centers for offenders in this Long Lent, now extending beyond 2002, has yet to be adequately told.) He understood the need for priestly fraternity and trust, but did not see how insidiously fraternity and trust can become clericalism's habit of protecting what must never be protected. He cared passionately about the reputation of the Church, but did not understand how practices once thought judicious are now ammunition for destroying that reputation in a new world where confidentiality is condemned as secrecy and discretion as dissembling. Especially odious were the attacks occasioned by the Cardinal's letters of sympathy to priests removed from ministry. Critics exploded in high dudgeon because he wrote to one priest who was apparently guilty of serial abuses that his ministry had been a blessing to "many people." No doubt his ministry, despite all, had been that. The repentant priest is still a brother in Christ and ontologically—as in "a priest forever"—still a priest. The critics would not forgive the Cardinal for not being as mean-spirited as they are.

Think Low

Yet it was right, and it was necessary, that he step down. He had lost his ability to communicate effectively, and communication, as in being a teacher, is the first responsibility of a bishop. In addition to the pressure of hundreds of lawsuits and a financial crisis pointing toward bankruptcy, there was the relentless, indeed merciless, determination of the media to give him every blame of the doubt, led by the *Boston Globe*, which is salivating to outdo its parent company, the *New York Times*, in the winning of Pulitzers and other plaudits bestowed by journalistic peers. We should and should not blame the media. On the one hand, without the media we would not know what went so very wrong in Boston and elsewhere. On the other hand, they have been vicious, dishonest, and guilty of violating the most elementary rules of journalistic ethics, if indeed one can still speak of journalistic ethics with a straight face.

The Rev. Gomes speaks of "a climate of hysteria and manipulation that has been created and sustained for nearly a year." He adds, "Where we might have hoped for a level of calm analysis and civic, even civil, discussion of the case in all of its humanity and complexity, we have been given little more than banner headlines, orchestrated press conferences, serial fascination with priestly deviancy, and plaintiff strategy." Headlines routinely trumpet as "news" what is no more than the latest charge by lawyers who have lined up more than five hundred clients to bring suit against the Boston archdiocese. Think low. We're talking money, really big money, here. Every day lawyers, reporters, victim organizations, and a passel of disgruntled priests became more and more explicit; they were set on bringing down Cardinal Law, they would settle for nothing less than blood. The Rev. Gomes again: "The victims would have themselves a victim; the lawyers would be able to proceed without credible opposition in the search for compensation; liberal voices for reform in the Church would see a nemesis removed; and the press would have brought down a mighty figure in a near-Watergate victory with Pulitzers all around."

Boston is a peculiar place. The Brahmins who once indisputably ran "the hub of the universe" and still control the media have never really accepted the presence of the great unwashed of Irish and Italian immigration. Catholic politicians, prosecutors, and judges who want to ingratiate themselves with the establishment seem to vie with one another to prove themselves as anti-Catholic as their betters. This is the country of Kennedy Catholicism, formed by that dynasty's creed that the ethnic accident of religion must never be permitted to interfere with the real world of

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ambition. Of course there are devout Catholics of influence in Boston, but, with a few honorable exceptions such as Mary Ann Glendon of Harvard Law School and Raymond Flynn, the former mayor, they were strangely silent throughout this ordeal. It is not that they should have defended the Cardinal's errors, but they could have protested the climate of hysteria and manipulation, they could have called for elementary fairness and decency. Just once more, the Rev. Gomes: "Those who not long ago were pleased to be pictured with the Cardinal, kissing his ring and attending his charitable events and proud to be known as archdiocesan insiders, now, like the disciples on Maundy Thursday, have forsaken him and fled." The Cardinal did not always act the role of a Christ figure in this drama, but the rest of the analogy holds. To the great shame of the Catholic lay leadership of Boston.

Media Collaborators

Then there are the clergy of Boston. The press, when trying not to be too egregious in gloating about its triumph, gives a measure of credit to others. Here is a story reporting that "the end was in sight when his strongest supporters, the priests of Boston, called for his resignation." Not quite. Not by a long shot. Fifty-eight priests signed that call. There are 887 diocesan priests in Boston and another 715 priests of religious orders. The fifty-eight priests are, as Captain Renault says in *Casablanca*, "the usual suspects." Among them are longstanding advocates of gay causes, habitual ranters against Rome's putative oppression, and those who go far beyond respectful dissent in publicly declaring that authoritative teachings of the Church are simply false. However useful they were to the media story line, their utterly predictable opposition to the Cardinal carried no weight at all. As one veteran priest put it, "Some of us might have signed a letter asking the Cardinal to consider resignation, but in no way were we going to associate ourselves with those guys."

Whoever succeeds Law as archbishop should, it has been suggested, keep that list of fifty-eight handy, for they represent the subculture of infidelity that is the source of priestly miscreance in doctrine and life. Why should anyone be surprised that scandals result when priests and teachers of theology make no bones about saying that the Church does not mean what it says about sexuality, celibacy, chastity, and sacred vows, or when they publicly declare that the Church is just wrong in what it teaches? And why are they still priests and teachers of theology? These are questions that Cardinal Law and too many other bishops apparently have not asked, or at least have not answered with clarity and firm resolve.

The press appears to temper its self-congratulation also by attributing the Cardinal's resignation to lay agitations. An organization called the Voice of the Faithful (VOTF) is routinely described as "rapidly growing." Over the months, the figure given for its national membership varies between 25,000 and 45,000. Apparently nobody knows. There is little evidence that VOTF has expanded beyond the familiar activist orbit of Call to Action, We Are Church, and similar groups pressing an anti-Rome and anti-hierarchy agenda in the name of "Americanizing" Catholicism. And there is little doubt that, if Rome had perceived the problem chiefly in terms of a bishop under attack from rebellious laity and a cabal of maverick priests, Cardinal Law's resignation would not have been accepted. In that case, Rome would likely have given assurances of support and told him to stay at his post and fight.

Cardinal Law brought down Cardinal Law. When the troubles began in January of last year, some urged him to take the initiative, to get the full story out quickly, and explain how and why the archdiocese had done what it did. But he didn't do that, perhaps on the advice of legal and financial counselors. It might have made a big difference. His standing and credibility were then very high. As it happened, the media, and especially the *Globe*, called the tunes, and the Cardinal and archdiocese were playing defense all the way. Another way of putting it is to say that the Cardinal was brought down by the system that lifted him up to such an eminent place in that system. Call it clericalism or call it the hierarchical habits of mind that too often prevent cardinal archbishops from being bishops. They are elevated to the sphere of universal responsibilities, serving on sundry congregations and councils in Rome, negotiating ecclesiastical problems among the nations. Others are left to mind the diocesan shop. On many things for which the bishop is responsible, I believe Cardinal Law when he says he did not know what was happening in Boston. This problem, too, is very insightfully analyzed by George Weigel in *The Courage To Be Catholic*, undoubtedly the best book on what has gone wrong and what might be done about it.

No "Domino Effect"

Boston is Boston and, contrary to media hopes for a string of ecclesiastical Watergates, is not likely to precipitate a "domino effect" across the country. In some other dioceses, things will unravel in their own way and on their own schedule, depending in large part on the plans of prosecutors and of lawyers bringing suit. The legal action, including possible criminal actions, along with huge financial claims, is

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now gravitating toward the other coast, with the Archdiocese of Los Angeles being the prime target. One watches with interest whether West Coast scandal will sustain or revive such intense national interest. Both there and in the rest of the country, people are not easily scandalized by what happens in California. As important—and although the *Los Angeles Times* is no doubt hungry for a share of the journalistic prizes—there is not on the coast the concentration of high-powered media that dominate the Northeast, and the nation.

When Can We Move On?

This will go and on, and we must be braced for the duration. Bishops will cope as best they can. Archbishop Charles Chaput of Denver has provided a model of the vibrant orthodoxy that addresses the doctrinal deformations at the source of the scandals, provides a shepherd's care for all the flock, and preserves the necessary bonds of trust between bishop and priests. Chicago, the archdiocese next largest to Los Angeles, has been relatively unscathed, and Francis Cardinal George has clearly emerged as the senior voice of the Church in the U.S., now that Cardinal Law and the late John O'Connor of New York are gone. Bishop John D'Arcy of Fort Wayne-South Bend has become an example for others. He had been an auxiliary in Boston and early on warned the archdiocese about the dangers of reassigning priests who had been "cleared" by St. Luke and other centers of putative expertise on sexual pathologies. Along with Anthony Cardinal Bevilacqua of Philadelphia, D'Arcy has been outspoken in warning against homosexuality in the priesthood. As the scandals began to break last year, he took the initiative in publishing a series of very persuasive articles in regional newspapers. (They are available free in booklet form by writing him at 150 East Doan Drive, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46806.) Then there is Bishop William Lori of Bridgeport, Connecticut, who was a member of the group that worked out with Rome the rules for dealing with abusive priests, and has demonstrated how they can work in a way that is both responsive to victims and fair to the accused. Other bishops might be mentioned, but suffice it to say that every diocese is different, and no other diocese is Boston.

There is Baltimore, for instance. William Cardinal Keeler released to the press a long list of names of priests who had over the decades been accused of some kind of sexual abuse. Many of them were retired and in nursing homes, many of them were dead. There were names of priests who had not been found guilty of any wrongdoing; nor was it claimed that the accusations were even credible. It was simply publicized that they had been accused, of something, by somebody, as long as forty years ago. Then there is the interesting Baltimore case of Father Maurice Blackwell. A black priest, he is something of a maverick and is popular with many, as mavericks often are. A young black man, Dontee Stokes, now age twenty-seven, walked up to Fr. Blackwell on the street and shot him three times. He claimed that when he was a teenager he had been sexually abused by Fr. Blackwell. Fr. Blackwell has not been charged with wrongdoing.

After the shooting, Cardinal Keeler very publicly befriended Stokes and his family. At Stokes' trial for attempted murder and other serious charges, Cardinal Keeler testified on his behalf. Stokes was acquitted of everything except a couple of minor gun offenses and is expected to serve several months of probation. All agree that the national scandal of priestly sex abuse weighed heavily with the jury. The prosecutor was outraged by the decision. The word is now out, he said, "In Baltimore City, if you have a difference with someone, you can settle it by shooting [him]." Others observed that in Baltimore it is now open season on priests. After his release of the list of infamy and his role in the Stokes trial, Cardinal Keeler is receiving very favorable reviews in the press. The *Baltimore Sun* has declared him "an example of openness and transparency."

And so it is that bishops are—with varying degrees of competence and ineptness, of courage and cowardice, of forthrightness and pandering—responding to sins, crimes, and other shames in their local churches, none of which is Boston but none of which is unaffected by what has happened in Boston. Out of all this, one continues to pray and hope, will come purification and renewal, although the signs of that springtime are still far off. I see that the editor of *Commonweal* is weary of my "mantra-like" call for fidelity, fidelity, fidelity. I'm sorry about that, but I can't get over the idea that, if priests and bishops had been faithful to the teaching of the Church and their sacred vows, there would have been no scandal in the first place. And the closely related idea: that the responsibility for the shameful fact that some, and not just a few, were not faithful rests primarily with bishops. Until there is evidence that more of them are seeing it, I suppose some of us will just have to go on saying it. Fidelity, fidelity, fidelity. I think of it not as a mantra but as a prayer. Everybody is eager for healing, reconciliation, and moving on. But none of that will happen except on the far side of an answer to that prayer.

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IT'S THE THEOLOGY, STUPID

What went wrong, and when, and why? Father Robert W. Crooker of the University of St. Thomas in Houston offers an interesting take on how to explain, at least in significant part, the priestly scandals. In short: it's the theology, stupid. Like others, Crooker notes that some of the most notorious serial offenders were ordained before Vatican II, in "the good old days" when seminaries insisted on obedience to the Magisterium, scorned effeminacy, and were strict about "particular friendships." The same is true of almost all the bishops and religious superiors on whose watch these bad things happened. Crooker asks, "Was there, then, some weakness in the Church of the 1950s that would have been vulnerable to the upheavals of the 1960s, even without the excitement and confusion over *aggiornamento* after the Council?" His answer is yes, and he believes the Council tried to address such weaknesses. For instance, the decree on the training of priests said: "Special care is to be taken for the improvement of moral theology. Its scientific presentation, drawing more fully on the teaching of Holy Scripture, should highlight the lofty vocation of the Christian faithful and their obligation to bring forth fruit in charity for the life of the world."

What was wrong with the moral theology conventionally taught is that it had very little to do with theology. Moral theology was mainly a matter of learning the list of duties and prohibitions necessary for hearing confessions. At stake was access to the sacraments and therefore a soul's salvation. It follows that a certain leniency, if not laxity, is in order, and that resulted in a garden variety of "probabilism." Meaning the confessor would not insist on an obligation that "approved authors" held to be doubtful. What the confessor must insist upon is not the good but the tolerable. This was joined to a kind of legal positivism: acts are seen as bad because they are forbidden rather than forbidden because they are bad. This invited the suspicion that one had a better chance at eternal salvation by remaining blamelessly unaware of the harder obligations. In other words, the legal opinion favoring freedom from obligation, if supported by probable opinion, may be followed with moral integrity even if the opinion favoring obligation is more probable.

Following the lead of the Council, the new *Catechism of the Catholic Church* begins with theology—the human person made in the image of God and called to share in the life of the Trinity. The Catechism goes on from there to treat the beatitudes, the virtues, the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and only then takes up the prescriptions and proscriptions of the Decalogue. Had the Council been understood and implemented, says Fr. Crooker, "It would have made a wonderful difference in the ministry of penance to ordinary, good people struggling with human weakness: the discipline of regular confession, instead of falling into general disuse, would have found fresh vitality and fruitfulness." But on this score, as on many others, the Council was not understood or implemented. For most priests, "moral theology" continued to mean probabilistic casuistry, with the very big difference that, after the Council, there was no limit to the number of "approved authors" offering probable opinions. Any professor of theology, especially if he had been a *peritus* or "expert" at the Council, was now an authority. The Catholic Theological Society of America could produce a book on human sexuality that put contraception, masturbation, adultery, homosexuality, and maybe bestiality on the list of doubtfuls.

Crooker thinks conservatives make a mistake by coming back with the argument that the Church's teaching on these questions is infallible. That plays into the hands of laxists who argue that the criteria for infallible teaching have not been met beyond reasonable doubt. "Non-infallible," it is gleefully pointed out, means "fallible," which is only a short step, in the minds of some, from being "probably false." A bishop was hard put to hold priests to traditional teaching when they could so readily produce "approved authors" in favor of their dissenting position that they are bound only by what has been, beyond doubt, infallibly declared infallible. Thus the pre-conciliar legalism reappears in a post-conciliar form. Moral theology is reduced to a matter of do's and don'ts. Fr. Crooker opines that "some of us need a fear of mortal sin to get us safely past a really strong temptation; we aspire to something higher, but in a real crunch the prospect of hellfire, like that of hanging, wonderfully concentrates the mind." A priest who started out as "a probabilist for his penitents but a tutiorist [or rigorist] for himself" may find it hard to deny himself the benefit of the doubt when the temptation to sin is really strong.

"What we priests need to live our celibacy faithfully and *joyfully* is a moral perspective that sees ourselves as made in God's image and called to eternal communion with Him, rather than one based on casuist haggling over the sixth and ninth commandments," says Fr. Crooker. "And while we won't deny absolution to anyone that a good and zealous probabilist would absolve, we'll be far better able to help and guide those thirsting for something more." That something more, I would add, is compellingly on offer from the Belgian Dominican Servais Pinckaers. His *Sources of Christian Ethics* is a

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magisterial account of what went wrong with moral theology and, more importantly, how to understand the Christian life as a journey toward the good, as a call to holiness, rather than as a roadmap for avoiding the impermissible. The perspective is set forth in a more accessible form for the nonspecialist in Pinckaers' little book *Morality: The Catholic View.*

Fr. Crooker speaks from many years of experience as a priest, confessor, and moral theologian. He does not take issue with my repeated assertion that the remedy for our present circumstance is threefold: "Fidelity, fidelity, and fidelity." But his comments help us to see that we must also ask, Fidelity to what? In an odd way, post-conciliar laxity is a perverse form of fidelity to a pre-conciliar and a-theological understanding of moral theology. "Special care is to be taken for the improvement of moral theology," said the Council. In this instance, too, the great task continues to be the genuine reception of the Council and its authoritative interpretation in the Catechism and magisterial statements such as the encyclical *Veritatis Splendor* (The Splendor of Truth). But you knew that.

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RE-EVANGELIZING A "POST-CHRISTIAN" WORLD

Inveighing and evangelizing go hand-in-hand as Robert W. Jenson, a noted Lutheran theologian, responds to the question, "What Is a Post-Christian?" He begins with the counsel of Chesterton's Father Brown to a young secularist friend about his secularism: "It's drowning all your rationalism and skepticism, it's coming in like a sea; and the name of it is superstition. . . . It's the first effect of not believing in God that you lose your common sense and can't see things as they are. Anything that anybody talks about, and says there's a good deal in it, extends itself indefinitely like an endless vista in a nightmare."

Jenson started out many years ago being convinced by the "secularization theology" of Friedrich Gogarten (1887-1967), and Jenson is still convinced today, despite the ways in which that theological initiative has been distorted. Biblical truth does demythologize the world, says Jenson, but replaces the myth of beginnings, gods, and goddesses with the message of the promised Kingdom. "Thus the faith of Israel, and so of the Church, is eschatological, independently of particular passages of her Scripture or particular developments in her religious history. Scripture does not find the truth of things in what they have been and therefore are, but in what they will be beyond themselves, that is, in what they will be in God, for God is all there is beyond creatures."

Absent that eschatological hope, people embrace an "almost-nihilism," which is manifestly pseudo-nihilism in its eagerness to construct new gods. "The mark of almost-nihilism's religiosity is that it is made up, and known by its devotees to be made up. It is nihilistic religiosity in that its objects are known to be—nothing. To observe such arbitrary religious invention happening, you need only attend that remarkable caricature of the American religious scene, the annual national convention of the American Academy of Religion (AAR), most sessions of which will be devoted to considering what parts of what 'traditions' can be crafted together to make a religion satisfactory to some group and/or set of interests. All of what Fr. Brown calls the 'bestial gods of the beginning' are indeed inspected for what use we might make of them, i.e., what role they might play in our superstition, while the more conservative handle Christian 'symbols' and 'metaphors' and 'concerns' in just the same way. It is important to realize that these self-appointed religious founders-out-of-nothing are quite aware and deliberate about what they are doing. Or merely consider how the teachings and rites of our churches are often treated by their supposed members as a smorgasbord from which to assemble a religion to their taste, often enough making it quite explicit that this is what they are doing."

The general public rhapsodizes about "spirituality" while evangelical Protestant writers wax enthusiastic about "theism," as though Christianity is one of many species of a genus, all with interchangeable parts. So who is a post-Christian? Jenson answers: "Well—there are whole immense congregations, of all denominations or none, that are post-Christian at least in their public self-presentation. Their theology is a collection of clichéd abstractions—'love' and 'acceptance' and 'empowerment' and 'peace-and-justice' (one word), and so on—and they could easily make any hero or mythic figure at all be the loving or accepting or empowering one, or the guru of peace-and-justice, instead of Jesus, and sometimes do."

Christianity, on the other hand, is persistently particular: "Sherlock Holmes famously said that when you eliminate possibilities until finally only one is left, that is the solution no matter how improbable. That a first-century Palestinian Jew, precisely as the individual person he is, should be the structuring point of the universe, would not be the first guess of minds schooled by the great Greek thinkers. But the long experiment of Western Civilization has eliminated all

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the mediating possibilities, reducing them to superstition. We have left just the two: waiting for nothingness and waiting for Jesus. And since nihilism is demonstrably not an intelligible thought, waiting for Jesus is the rational choice."

I expect a good many readers will recognize what Jenson is getting at when he writes, "A great deal of our preaching and teaching is exactly backwards. So, for example, the preacher will say that what a text from one of the Gospels, about a miracle or parable, 'is really about is acceptance of people in all their diversity.' A true sermon would go just the other way: 'What our talk of acceptance and diversity etc. is really trying to get at is Jesus.'" The alternative to Christianity is superstition, which, as Fr. Brown knew, is an "endless vista." It is everything in general and nothing real or true in particular. Jenson's inveighing may be, as inveighing tends to be, exaggerated, but it is a salutary exaggeration. If the gospel were authentically preached and lived, he writes, "our churches will of course get much smaller than they are. It is all very well to denounce such theologians as Stanley Hauerwas for 'sectarianism,' but they have much the right of it against their critics."

A New Christendom

I'm not sure at all. Presiding at the altar of Immaculate Conception on Fourteenth St. and First Ave., with hundreds and hundreds of ordinary Americans, I am consistently impressed by the intensity of the response to the particularity of Bible story, of bread and wine, of body and blood, of confession and absolution, of lively interaction with Mary and all the saints, and, yes, of miracles—and all this concentrated as concentrated can be on Jesus Christ incarnate, present, helping, judging, forgiving, and coming again. What Jenson says about the generalized and instrumental religiosity of AAR, of psychobabbled spiritualities, and of religion in the employ of sundry empowerments is all true enough. Today's task of re-evangelizing may be, in some sectors of our society, more difficult than was evangelizing in, say, the fourth century, mainly because in the West so many people think, mistakenly, that they know "the Christian thing."

Jenson writes: "When Constantine, speaking for a dying antiquity, called the Church to be the moral and intellectual restorer of late Mediterranean civilization, I do not see how the Church could have refused this service of love. But equally, as the West now defines itself against the faith, the Church only perverts herself when she tries to hang on to her Constantinian position, by bowing and scraping to the culture." I would suggest that the service of love, then and now, is to effectively proclaim the gospel, as in, "God so loved the world. . . ." The restoration of civilization may or may not be a consequence of such effective proclamation. The hoped-for public influence of the Christian message should not be derided as trying to hang on to a mythical "Constantinian position." Bowing and scraping is of course to be condemned, but alertness to the sensibilities of the culture is not bowing and scraping. It can be and should be understood as a necessary part of effective communication.

So I am ambivalent about Jenson's analysis. To be sure, the Church must be prepared to be countercultural, and when the crunch comes—as in the conflict between the culture of life and the culture of death—even *contra mundum*. But the driving force of evangelizing and re-evangelizing is love for the world, as God loves the world. When the Church is against the world, it is always against the world for the world. Admittedly, these are large and complicated questions, and I am keenly aware that also the faithful gathered at Immaculate Conception are often inwardly torn between Christian particularity and the superstitions and idolatries of the pseudo-nihilism in much of the surrounding culture. Yet the churches, however debilitated their proclamation and enervated their discipleship, are flourishing in America. Some may think it a sadness, but they are not likely to grow smaller in the foreseeable future. Whether it is a curse or blessing, we do not live in a post-Christian society but in an incorrigibly and confusedly Christian America.

Reflecting on related questions in the 1930s, T. S. Eliot contended that a society is not post-Christian until Christianity is formally rejected and replaced by another understanding of reality, something definite and with a name. That happened in the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany. It may be happening in Western Europe, although the replacement has not yet a name, except for "secularization," which denotes simply the decline of Christian faith and public influence. Those who are excessively impressed by the academy, the editorial page of the *New York Times*, and powers claiming to control what are called the commanding heights of culture may think America is post-Christian. It is not. It is, as it has always been, a maddeningly muddled Christian society. And perhaps becoming more so. Compared with accepting the responsibilities and addressing the problems that attend Christian America, coping with post-Christianity is a breeze. One can simply join up with a small and ever so much more satisfactory society of other true believers. As is the way with sectarianism. I do not think Jenson is proposing that, but I know no other way to read much of the writing of Stanley Hauerwas.

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Our circumstance is not all that new. To our individual and communal circumstance St. Paul said what always needs saying, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect" (Romans 12). Whether in the first, fourth, or twenty-first centuries, Christians have never quite gotten the knack of distinguishing between transforming and conforming. Then too, America is not the world. The assumption of a post-Christian world offered by Jenson and others is very much attuned to our American situation and, to a lesser degree, to Western Europe. We Euro-Americans are a small, and becoming ever smaller, minority of the Christian movement. In Latin America, Asia, and Africa, the gospel—although alloyed, as always, with cultural counter-gospels—is exploding with the force of fresh discovery. Viewed on this larger screen, perhaps the Christian motto of the twenty-first century should be "Forward to Constantinianism!" It would be a very different Constantine and a very different Christendom than anything known in the past, but, like earlier times, it will be recognizable as yet another episode along the embattled, splendored, and stumbling way of the Church toward the historical vindication of the Jesus for whom we wait.

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WHILE WE'RE AT IT

■ "It will never be known what acts of cowardice have been motivated by the fear of not looking sufficiently progressive." That's Charles Péguy, early-twentieth-century French essayist and Catholic of sorts. I say "of sorts" because in his mid-thirties he renounced his atheistic socialism and returned to the Catholic faith, but not to full communion. Orwell said something similar about the fear of not looking sufficiently progressive, but Péguy said it better. I have had occasion to cite that epigram in recent months in response to people who ask how some bishops could have done what they did, and not have done what they should have done. If the scandals are, at their very core, about fidelity to the Church's teaching and sacred vows, why did so many bishops, over a very long period of time, not discipline the proponents of infidelity? See Péguy on cowardice. Péguy is not very well known today. Perhaps his most familiar one-liner is, "God writes straight with crooked lines." There are occasions beyond number for using that one. And sometimes you run across this one: "Homer is new and fresh this morning, and nothing, perhaps, is as old and tired as today's newspaper." Or this: "A word is not the same with one writer as with another. One tears it from his guts. The other pulls it out of his overcoat pocket." Péguy published a journal of opinion and in my capacity as an editor I especially like this: "A review only continues to have life if each issue annoys at least one-fifth of its readers. Justice lies in seeing that it is not always the same fifth." Liberty Fund has recently reissued, with a foreword by Pierre Manent, Péguy's *Temporal and Eternal*, which was first published in English in 1958 and is well worth a read. But the present reflection on Péguy is occasioned by Roger Kimball's new book of essays, *Lives of the Mind: The Use and Abuse of Intelligence* (Ivan R. Dee, $28.95). I will not repeat here my words of heartfelt praise for the achievements of Mr. Kimball (see FT, January 2001). Readers of the *New Criterion*, of which he is managing editor, need no persuasion on that score. In addition to Péguy, the new book examines, inter alia, Raymond Aron, Walter Bagehot (Kimball says he would be quoted more if people were not afraid of mispronouncing the name—it is Ba'-jet), Schiller, Hegel, Kierkegaard, Wittgenstein, Trollope, and—along with such heavyweights because Kimball thinks he is underestimated—P. G. Wodehouse. Among the attractive features of Mr. Kimball's writing is what might be called intellectual humility. He does not pretend to know more than he does. He readily acknowledges that he is reading some of these worthies for the first time, and is eager to share his discoveries. We all have, more than most of us are inclined to admit, literary and philosophical gaps in our education. *Lives of the Mind* invites the reader to join Mr. Kimball in finding out what may have been missed. And, if you're not all that earnest about continuing education, I should add that it is also a great pleasure to read.

■ James C. Kopp says that he shot Buffalo, New York, abortionist Dr. Barnett A. Slepian but did not intend to kill him. His purpose, he says, was to wound Slepian so that he could not kill the babies scheduled for abortion the next day. "If you did the same thing to protect a baby that was one day old," Kopp asserted, "it would never be considered a crime." There is truth in that, of course, which is what makes it a morally seductive line of argument. The seduction should be relentlessly resisted for many reasons that I will not rehearse here but are explored thoroughly in an earlier symposium, "Killing Abortionists." Interested readers are referred to the December 1994 issue, which can also be accessed on the FT website.

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■ George Lindbeck was an official Lutheran observer at the Second Vatican Council and he recalls a meeting with John XXIII when the Pope spoke on some of his favorite words from Scripture, "the mercies of the Lord are new every morning." The Pope said he had a hard time deciding what to do on any given day, but the Lord was merciful: He always told him every morning. Lindbeck thought he was referring to his convoking of the Council, which took everybody by surprise but which the Lord presumably told him to do. He adds: "John XXIII would repeat those words if he were with us now. He was basically a traditionalist rather like Mother Teresa, for example, and I suppose he would be appalled at much of the aftermath of the Council. Perhaps he would sometimes even wonder, as Luther did after the Reformation after a comparable lapse of time, whether it was really worth it. Yet the Lord's mercies are new every morning. What stops these words from being Pollyannish is their context: they come from Lamentations (3:22-23). Even in our day, cheerfulness keeps breaking through."

■ You may have noticed that the term "paleoliberalism" is gaining currency. George McGovern is taken as representative of the breed. Mark Shea watched his television commentary on the 2002 election and observed that some people have lived thirty years since 1972 while McGovern has lived 1972 for thirty years. Here's a distressed Democratic editorial on the election: "Bush's political genius can be exaggerated. . . . Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein both help explain Bush's 'triumph.' . . . Politically, the nation remains deeply and evenly divided. Republicans would be foolhardy to think that their slim majority in Congress represents a right-wing mandate for change. Having convinced the American voter of the fiction that moderation is the soul of their party, however, it is a good bet that Republicans will now find the temptations of ideology irresistible." No, that's not the *New York Times*, although the *Times*' editorial following the election was almost identically worded. It's *Commonweal*, which, as its departing editor has pointed out, does not bill itself as a Catholic publication. That perhaps explains why, among all the factors addressed in its assessment of the election, there is no mention of the remarkable pattern of the defeat of hard-core pro-abortionists and the victory of pro-lifers in contests where abortion was a deciding issue. That is no cause for cheer among paleoliberals who are determined to keep the faith. No, not *that* faith.

■ The Jesuit Conference has written President Bush seconding the bishops' statement that the U.S. has a moral right and duty to defend the common good against aggression. The terrorist threat, the letter notes, "may require a carefully measured military response, which should be pursued only after all diplomatic efforts have been exhausted." The letter says there are "approximately four thousand U.S. Jesuit priests and brothers working abroad and in our domestic projects." In 1965, Jesuits in the U.S. numbered 8,393. A recent issue of *National Jesuit News* reports that, at the present rate of new men entering the Society and completing their formation, there will soon be one thousand Jesuits in the U.S. Excluding those who are still in formation and those who are over seventy, there will be about 525 Jesuits in active ministry. The good news is that many of those over seventy are very active indeed.

■ Daniel Pipes of the Middle East Forum renders an important service in his assiduous chronicling of threats posed by militant Islam, or Islamism. I think, however, he misreads the lessons to be drawn from Philip Jenkins' writing about "the next Christendom," referring to the explosive growth of Christianity in the southern hemisphere. Pipes' commentary is titled, "What Next? Militant Christianity?" In the liberal North, Pipes writes, "religious beliefs and practices are ever more removed from traditional Christianity," and he seems to think that a good thing. The rapidly growing Catholic, evangelical, and pentecostal movements in the South, by way of contrast, are orthodox, traditional, and militant. "To understand the future of Christianity," Pipes concludes, "keep your eye on those Southern believers who reject the North's liberal outlook and who increasingly dominate the faith." The assumption appears to be that the future of liberal democracy depends upon secularization and, more particularly, a religious liberalism "ever more removed from traditional Christianity." If that is the case, liberal democracy faces a very grim future in a world in which de-secularization seems to be the order of the century. Christianity—and, I would add, Judaism—are demonstrably compatible with liberal democracy and, I would argue, are the chief source of the constituting principles of a liberal political and social order. We can only hope that Islam can develop within its own tradition the resources for affirming the kind of liberal order that we cherish. It is a potentially fatal move to depict our cause, as Pipes seems to do, as that of secularization vs. traditional religion. In a religiously resurgent world, that puts us on the losing side. As important, that depiction is false to history and deeply offensive to traditional Christians and Jews.

■ An "ERC" is an evangelical Protestant who has become a Catholic, and Scott McKnight of North Park

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University in Chicago examines current examples of the species in "From Wheaton to Rome: Why Evangelicals Become Roman Catholic." Writing in the *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, the author draws two conclusions that should be of interest to both evangelicals and Catholics: "First, until the evangelical churches can get a firmer grip on authority, unity, history, liturgy, and a reasonable form of certainty on interpretation, there will continue to be plenty of ERCs. I am not saying that ERCs are led into the RCC for psychological reasons—though I would be a fool to think psychological studies would not reveal some things for consideration. No, what I am saying is that there are some serious challenges here that will take plenty of planning and consideration. Furthermore, until evangelicals learn to take seriously the importance of liturgy and aesthetics as a true embodiment of the gospel, they will lose converts to those sectors of the Church that do so. Thomas Howard once said accurately that 'all buildings are icons' and that '*ceremony does what words alone can never do.* It carries us beyond the merely explicit, the expository, the verbal, the propositional, the cerebral, to the center where the Dance goes on.' This aesthetical and liturgical dimension of the gospel interweaves its presence in each of the five crises analyzed above. If it is not a major catalyst of conversion for the ERC, for some it plays an important role. Second, I lay down another observation: until the Roman Catholic Church learns to focus on gospel preaching of personal salvation, on the importance of personal piety for all Christians—and abandons its historical two-level ethic—[on] personal study, and on the Bible itself, there will be many who will leave Catholicism to join the ranks of evangelicalism. There is something wrong in Rome that leads so many to Wheaton, or to Willow Creek! And the rhetoric of ERCs is not going to convince most evangelicals until these features become a central aspect of Catholic life."

■ In a phrase that should be included in books of quotations for a long time to come, Daniel Patrick Moynihan described our cultural problem as one of "defining deviancy down." The dynamics of the descent are maddeningly complicated, involving ever-shifting notions of compassion, sensitivity, victimization, and offense. Drug abuse, teenage promiscuity, suicide—all come close to being "normalized" in a society that, at the same time, increasingly rejects the idea that anything is normative. What was once deviant, for instance homosexuality, is now declared normal, while questioning that change is "homophobia" and is declared deviant. Little wonder that many people are confused. You can't tell the cultural players without a scorecard and such a scorecard is provided by Ann Hendershott in *The Politics of Deviance* (Encounter, 190 pp., $26.95). The author is professor of sociology at the University of San Diego and provides an evenhanded account of how we got to where we are. Her book is part history, part social criticism, part moral reflection, and in large part an effort to rescue sociology as a discipline. The constituting idea of the social sciences, going back to defining figures such as Durkheim and Weber, is that a society requires boundaries or fairly clear and stable notions of what is "social" and what is "antisocial," what is "normal" and what is "deviant." In recent decades, however, the social sciences have joined hands with advocacy groups and a sympathetic media in defining deviancy down, or even defining it away. Charles Krauthammer, on the other hand, has suggested that what we are witnessing is "defining deviancy up"—meaning that something has to be way over the top before it qualifies as deviancy. That, too, is a big part of the truth. My own view is that we are witnessing the inversion of deviancy. Here, for instance, is a front-page story in the *New York Times* about an American nurse shot dead by a Muslim in Lebanon. She was working with an evangelical aid group that cares for children, mainly Muslim children, in need. The word got out that she was also telling the Muslim children about Jesus, and so she was killed. In what used to be the usual view of things, murder is definitely a deviant act and is severely censured. The *Times* story, however, is overwhelmingly sympathetic to the killer, instructing the reader on how very offensive a Christian presence, never mind any hint of missionary activity, is to Muslims. In this telling of the story, the American nurse is clearly the one engaged in deviant behavior that violates Muslim sensibilities. The moral is not that Muslims need to develop a greater respect for human rights and religious freedom but that Americans—and especially Americans prone to something so louche as sharing their faith—need to respect Muslim disrespect. A quite perfect inversion of deviance. But I wander. Anne Hendershott's book is about what is happening on the homefront, not about today's clash of civilizations. On second thought, maybe it is about a clash of civilizations, at home. In any event, it is very much worth a read. The title is *The Politics of Deviance.*

■ In "A History of Their Own" (October 2002), I mentioned the hopes and frustrations of Poles and others in Central Europe in telling their stories about the Nazi and Soviet times, and their present struggles to become "normal societies." That comment elicited a number of responses, including a letter from Professor John Radzilowski of the University of Minnesota, who helps edit a very handsome publication, *Periphery: Journal of Polish Affairs.* It is published by Ave Maria

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University in Michigan and is available for $16 per issue by writing the university at 3535 Indian Trail, Orchard Lake, Michigan 48324.

■ Writing on another matter, Nino Langiulli of Lynbrook, New York, mentions in passing his unhappiness with John Stuart Mill's doctrine that the test of an action being morally good is the amount of pleasure or happiness it produces for others. Mr. Langiulli quotes an observation of the ever-quotable Edmund Burke with which I was not familiar: "The great inlet by which a color for oppression has entered the world is by one man's pretending to determine concerning the happiness of another, and by claiming to use what means he thinks proper in order to bring him to a sense of it. It is the ordinary and trite sophism of oppression." Of course some of us do have definite ideas on what would make others happy, as in blessed. The crucial difference is between using persuasion or coercion to bring others to a sense of it. Even the great Burke sometimes sacrificed precision to quotability.

■ In March 1993, we published "Mainline Churches: The Real Reason for Decline" by Dean Hoge and his colleagues, who had done a careful study of the Presbyterian Church (USA). When all the other variables are taken into account, they argued, the real reason is a lack of belief. R. Scott Appleby, professor of history at Notre Dame, applies that analysis to contemporary Catholicism. "The challenge of Catholic education and formation in our media-driven, cyberspace age is no less than this: older Catholics must be restored to and younger Catholics introduced to a sense of Catholicism as a comprehensive way of life—as a comprehending wisdom and set of practices that bring integrity and holiness to individuals and to the families and extended communities to which they belong and which they serve." The years after Vatican II, he writes, saw the rise of the first "post-ethnic generation" of American Catholics, people for whom Catholicism was no longer an intact culture (or subculture) but one choice among others in the religious marketplace. In addition, Catholicism today is marked by many voices—right and left, liberal and conservative—claiming to define what is authentically Catholic. "In the realm of ideas and Catholic self-understanding, change came most powerfully with the introduction of genuine pluralism into American Catholic theology once Thomism was supplemented, and in many arenas supplanted, by narrative, feminist, liberationist, and other inductive theologies grounded in experience." The result is "a rich farrago of theological options, many of them rich and enlivening but experienced by Catholics piecemeal and without benefit of an overarching view of 'the Catholic thing.'"

In his address to the Catholic Academy for Communication Arts Professionals, Appleby concludes with this: "Catholic communicators must be leaders among those who package the faith, not as a series of discrete bits and bytes but as organic, interdependent sets of beliefs, insights, and practices by which one may lead a morally coherent and spiritually fruitful life." Mr. Appleby's cultural critique is, I believe, pretty much on target. He is also right in understanding our current circumstance in terms of a crisis of belief. But is the problem that a manualist Thomism has been displaced by narrative, feminist, liberationist, and other inductive theologies? In religious studies courses, perhaps, as well as in many departments of theology misleadingly called Catholic. Without discounting the influence of the systematic academic unlearning of Catholic teaching that students had never learned in the first place, most Catholics have never heard of the liberationist and other theological fashions Appleby cites. What they have heard and believed and internalized is that there is no such thing as authoritative Catholic teaching; that Catholicism is a matter of "discrete bits and bytes" to be accessed according to felt needs. We do not need communicators who will "package the faith" more attractively. We need teachers and exemplars—parents, priests, bishops, religious, academics—who invite a new generation to the high adventure of living the faith. That adventure is compellingly depicted in Scripture and living tradition, including Vatican II and its authoritative interpretation by the Magisterium, and not least by John Paul II. Mr. Appleby is right in saying that Catholicism is a comprehensive and coherent culture shaped by a story entailing truth claims that require a response of faith. What is missing from his account is any reference to where and how that story is authoritatively told. I am not sure that the faith can or should be "packaged," but I am sure that no skills of the communication arts will make up for uncertainty about the faith to be communicated.

■ It would seem that the *New Republic* has a Christian problem, and, more specifically, a Catholic problem. The longest article in its long history was Daniel Jonah Goldhagen's slashing attack on Pius XII, "What Would Jesus Have Done?" (January 21, 2002). The article has now been expanded into a book, *A Moral Reckoning.* The Archdiocese of Munich went to court and succeeded in having the book sent back to the printers to correct Goldhagen's misidentification as a Nazi sympathizer of a cardinal who, in fact, heroically resisted Hitler. (One notes that the error is not corrected in Knopf's American edition.) Martin Peretz, editor-in-chief of *TNR*, writes that the Church "caught Daniel Jonah Goldhagen in one tiny mistake,"

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and its going to court is an instance of "reviving the index of what it does not want people to read." Goldhagen's fault is hardly limited to one tiny mistake. In the June/July 2002 issue of FT ("Goldhagen v. Pius XII"), Ronald Rychlak specified in great detail dozens of misrepresentations, calumnies, and outright lies in Goldhagen's *TNR* article. They are repeated in *A Moral Reckoning*. On another front, Leon Wieseltier, literary editor of *TNR*, has taken on William F. Buckley, Jr. and your scribe. Buckley's offense was to take exception to a Catholic statement, which has since been withdrawn, that suggested Christians should eschew evangelizing Jews. Wieseltier writes, "Buckley will have none of this decency." Buckley's "affirmation of the Christian mission to the Jews is a delegitimation of Jewish belief, and a delegitimation of Jewish belief is downright un-American, for it flies in the face of the pluralist revolution in religious life that is one of the glories of America." No, to assert Christian truth claims is, at some crucial points, to disagree with Jewish belief, and pluralism means that we engage disagreements within the bond of civility, not pretend that there are not disagreements or that they do not matter. Later, Wieseltier turns to another complaint. "A few months ago Richard John Neuhaus alleged in FIRST THINGS that I 'make no secret of [my] contempt for Christianity.' I know what he means. But my 'contempt' for Christianity is only intellectual, and I may just as plausibly be accused of 'contempt' for Judaism." There are, he writes, claims made by Judaism that "strike me as false, as fantasy, and so I cannot accept them." He continues, "But I have never encountered an idea more unacceptable to my frail, sweating mind than the idea of the Incarnation, of the paternity of God, of the word made flesh. I have always been grateful that this philosophical absurdity is not my problem, that I may dismiss it without a tremor of treason." This is a statement of raw emotivism. An intellectual owes more to his readers than a report on how he feels. I suppose one might even say that his statement is a delegitimation of Christian belief, and a delegitimation of Christian belief is downright un-American. I wouldn't say that, but one might. Wieseltier is not finished. "And I plead guilty to Neuhaus' charge in one further respect. There is one other stumbling stone. It is the Vatican." He wants it understood that, in addition to all the terrible things the Vatican has done to Jews, he has slight respect for this pope and "I rather resent the media's promotion of John Paul II into a teacher of all the world. . . . There is no way, no way at all, ever, that the pope, this pope, any pope, can have spiritual authority for me." Dare one say that the man doth protest too much? He says his view is "gracious" and "the name of this graciousness is democracy." If this be graciousness, give me contempt. Better still, give me reasoned argument rather than the bald assertion of prejudice. Some months earlier, Wieseltier criticized me for writing that his disposition toward Christianity is a "teaching of contempt." He was offended that I used a phrase that is ordinarily associated with advocating anti-Semitism. I assume we can now agree that his disposition is one of contempt. That leaves only the question of whether his writing is teaching or simply venting.

■ The very next issue of *TNR* has Michael Sean Winters assaulting "George Weigel and his fellow neocons." The occasion is Weigel's book, *The Courage To Be Catholic*, and Winters is particularly offended that Weigel is not, as it is said, gay-friendly. "Weigel talks about the need for every Catholic to be more faithful. But he makes it sound so easy, nothing more complicated than keeping our pants zipped." Yet throughout the book, and beginning with the title, Weigel's argument is that faithfulness is a difficult but high adventure requiring courage, discipline, self-sacrifice, and sustaining grace. Winters does not see it that way. Weigel and the neocons are guilty of Pelagianism, intellectual pride, triumphalism, aversion to debate, and thinking they have all the answers. I, for one, plead innocent on the Pelagianism charge.

■ What Garry Wills is for the *New York Review of Books*, Mr. Winters may be becoming for the *New Republic*, the house authority on all things Catholic. A 1999 *TNR* article by Winters is a five-page attack on neoconservatives in the guise of a review of David Schindler's *Heart of the World, Center of the Church*, which book is, in turn, an attack on neoconservatives in the name of the great Hans Urs von Balthasar. "Richard John Neuhaus, Michael Novak, and George Weigel are probably the three best-known Catholic intellectuals in America," writes Mr. Winters, and they are dangerous because "the disposition to unite [Throne and Altar] burns with Metternich-like ferocity in the neoconservative breast." He allows that "the throne of their desire happens to be a democratic polity and a capitalist economy; but theologically speaking, a state is a state, a throne is a throne, worldly power is worldly power." Monarchy or republic, despotism or freedom, what's the difference? According to Winters, the neocons believe that all the theological questions have been settled "and the only challenge that remains is the challenge of politics." Never mind that the first sentence in the editorial launching the premier issue of this journal forcefully rejects such a view, asserting that the first thing to be said about religion and public life is that public life is not the first thing. Few themes in these pages have been so sustained and

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emphatically asserted over the years as the relativizing of politics. Apparently you don't have to attend to what authors say when you know what burns in their breast. As for Professor Schindler's book, Winters says it is "the most important Catholic text to be published in the United States for some time." And it is that because it "introduces Balthasar to an American audience." Balthasar, in this reading, is everything the neoconservatives are not. Again, never mind the frequent and appreciative treatment of Balthasar in these pages. Apart from its "introducing" Balthasar, however, Mr. Winters, it turns out, does not think much of the Schindler book. It is hard to read, suffers from an "inalertness to history," and perpetuates a "crude and hoary" concept of the masculinity of men with which Mr. Winters expresses strong disagreement. (For Balthasar, Winters says, Christianity is not a moral code but "a stupendous claim about the supernatural." He does not say why one should exclude the other, and in fact Balthasar wrote extensively on the moral life as the way of Christ.) There is perverse amusement in Mr. Winters' cockeyed eccentricity, but his very long essay finally disserves almost every subject it touches. David Schindler's arguments are deserving of more serious treatment. It is hardly accurate, however, to say that his recent book "introduces Balthasar to an American audience." That tribute might fit Edward Oakes' justly acclaimed 1994 introduction to Balthasar, *Pattern of Redemption*, but the truth is that a number of publishers, chiefly Ignatius Press, have been bringing out Balthasar volumes by the dozens for many years, and his influence is now comparable to that of John Paul II among those who have sensed the possibility of what one neoconservative author has called "the Catholic moment." But enough, or else this will turn into that extended response to Winters that I decided not to write.

■ *Newsweek*, *Time*, and *U.S. News* have long known that Jesus on the cover is a real sales-booster. Now here is *Popular Mechanics* with a cover story, "The Real Face of Jesus: Forensic Science Reveals the True Image of Jesus." Never mind that it's a journalistic scam. According to Cover Analyzer, an outfit that measures single-copy sales on three hundred consumer magazines, Jesus on the cover results in an average 45 percent increase in sales. The Bible is the next best thing, while any mention of God on the cover also does the trick. The one thing that doesn't sell is scandal. Cover stories on the Catholic sex abuse problems consistently underperformed against average sales. There is no doubt some deep religio-cultural truth to be mined from this, but I will leave that to others.

■ "Our sin is that of the Jerusalem of Jeremiah: idolatry. The World Trade Center (the name implies the sin), together with the Pentagon, are quite literally places of worship. There, world domination, monetary and military, is cozened, calculated, paid tribute." So writes Father Daniel Berrigan in his new book *Lamentations: From New York to Kabul and Beyond* (Sheed & Ward). Of September 11, he writes, "Fallen, fallen is babylon the great . . . they see the smoke arise as she burns." He alone is left to speak the truth. "And what of the Church, what response to the war? Not a word of contradiction or rebuke. Let the inflexible dogma of the innocents (ourselves), grossly wounded by the guilty (your President knows who)—let this stand unchallenged. . . . Church and state, it shortly became clear, stood foursquare in close collusion. A crusade! The bishops, demoralized by scandal, evangelically illiterate, walked *peri passu* with the warmaking state. The twin towers fell to rubble. The twin powers turned to war." So far our reading of *Lamentations*. Last October, the Pax Christi organization invited me to "debate" Fr. Dan at Riverside Church up on Morningside Heights. It was not much of a debate. I used my thirty minutes to present the just war doctrine and the questions it raises about the war on terror. Fr. Dan used most of his in reading a 1991 editorial by a Jesuit condemning the Gulf War of that time. There was little real exchange, in part because of the wretched acoustics of Riverside Church, in larger part because Fr. Dan is old and weakened and hard of hearing. He can still write vigorously, as witness *Lamentations*. The crowd was his—veterans of peace movements past. The mood was nostalgic, and more sad than angry. Fr. Dan was introduced as "the Isaiah of our time," and accepted the tribute with humility. There were friends of mine there, too, from a time long ago, as Fr. Dan and I were friends a long time ago. Now, it would seem, there is no point of meeting. Except the most important: we are—profound disagreements notwithstanding—servants of the same Lord. At least I earnestly hope that Fr. Dan believes that is the case. But, to tell the truth, I am not sure he does. If not, that would be the deepest sadness.

■ In my comment on Bishop Wilton Gregory's presidential address to the bishops in November, I quoted his statement that some "have chosen this moment to advance the acceptance of practices and ways of life that the Church cannot and will never condone." On the *NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*, the bishop later explained that he had in mind abortion, same-sex unions, and women's ordination. The editors of *Commonweal* complain about the "easy conflation" of the three questions. They are not "the triumvirate of heterodoxy that Gregory suggests, but discrete and

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important issues. They should be treated as such." Ah, yes, let us not be simplistic but deal with these complex questions in a nuanced manner, and so forth. On all three of the practices mentioned, the Catholic Church has spoken with full authority, saying that they cannot and will never be condoned. Except for abortion, *Commonweal* does not assent to the Church's teaching. It is not, as they would have it, that the editors are more nuanced and appreciative of complexity than Bishop Gregory. It is that they disagree with him and with the teaching authority of the Church. The continuing conversation would be enhanced by a greater measure of candor and clarity.

■ The Calvinists of the Strict Observance who edit *Nicotine Theological Journal* offer some thoughts on the differences between Protestants and Catholics: "This is not a cheap shot at Roman Catholics (at least it is not the intent). The difference between Rome and Protestantism these days on good works actually works toward Roman Catholicism's favor. The church that once accused Luther's teachings of antinomianism has consistently made room for repeat offenders, the kind of sinners whom Protestants are quick to remove from church rolls. Roman Catholic history is filled with examples of believers who fall off the wagon, repent, confess their sin, and find forgiveness in the church's ministry. From whiskey priests to mafia dons, the Roman Catholic Church has been a communion, despite its teaching on the relationship of faith and works, where the believer's ongoing battle with sin is frankly acknowledged and accommodated. This makes it one of the great ironies in Western Christianity that the ones who originally accused Luther of sanctioning immorality have been the communion to provide what appears a roomier basis for fellowship than Protestants can muster." At least that's the way things used to be. But now *NTJ* wonders whether, in the process of "becoming an American church," Catholicism has not been "infected" with Protestant legalism, what with all the strange talk about "zero tolerance" and "one strike and you're out" aimed at those who have sometimes failed in their "ongoing battle with sin." We Catholics should listen carefully to our Calvinist brethren, and not just for reasons of ecumenical politeness.

■ There is *Christianity Today*, the magazine. And then there is Christianity Today International (CTI). If evangelical Protestantism, which defines itself over against mainline Protestantism, itself has a mainline, *Christianity Today* reflects it, and does so in a very thoughtful manner. CTI, on the other hand, is a big business with many holdings, including *Christianity Today*. CTI has just announced that it has struck a deal with the publisher Tyndale House to manage the electronic end of the "Left Behind" series, which is a very big business indeed. The nine "Left Behind" books, written by Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins, have sold more than fifty million copies. Business is business. What grates is the smarmy rationale offered by the CEO of CTI: "While opinions vary about the books' eschatology, it is clear that they introduce to American culture themes of God's holiness, judgment, and redemption—themes largely lost to the public consciousness. We hope this collaborative effort will encourage many additional responses to the gospel of Jesus Christ." Sorry, "while opinions vary" doesn't quite do the job. Billy Graham founded CTI in 1956 in order to publish *Christianity Today*, and its founding editor was theologian Carl F. H. Henry. As much or more than any single figure, Henry led American fundamentalism into intellectual engagement with other Christians and with the larger culture. At first he and his hearty band were called the "neo-evangelicals," and they laid the groundwork for the multitude of ministries and institutions that are today known simply as evangelical Protestantism. Among the chief purposes of *Christianity Today* was to combat the wooden literalism, Bible prophecy sensationalism, and dispensationalist deliriums so successfully peddled by the "Left Behind" series. It would have been better if the CEO had said that business is business and left it at that.

■ I mentioned earlier the March 1993 FT article by Dean R. Hoge and his associates on how young people reared as Presbyterians had slight denominational loyalty and later drifted away. That article became part of the book *Vanishing Boundaries* (Westminster/ John Knox). Now Hoge—who is a Presbyterian and long a professor at Catholic University of America—and his colleagues have published *Young Adult Catholics* (University of Notre Dame Press). In a national in-depth survey of Catholics under forty, they find that only 10 percent no longer consider themselves Catholic, and that holds for both Latinos and non-Latinos. On some core teachings of the Church, these young people are generally orthodox. Over 90 percent affirm the divinity of Jesus, 80 percent believe in "a divine judgment after death," and 90 percent "strongly agree or moderately agree [that] in Mass the bread and wine actually become the body and blood of Christ." Three out of four non-Latinos and four out of five Latinos cannot imagine themselves "being anything other than Catholic." All good news, or so it would seem, except that only one out of five attends Mass weekly, and half of them agree that "all the great religions of the world are equally true and good." At the same time, three-quarters agree that "the only

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absolute Truth for humankind is in the teachings of Jesus Christ." Go figure. Father Andrew Greeley has popularized the phrase "communal Catholic," meaning those who remain profoundly Catholic in their sensibilities but are detached from the actual life and practices of the Church. Hoge & Co. say that today's young adults are not communal Catholics but the children of communal Catholics. "Their knowledge of the language and symbolism of the tradition is more limited and sparse—as is their experience of Catholicism as a tight-knit cultural system." In a generally sympathetic review of *Young Adult Catholics*, Peter Steinfels writes: "The authors hypothesize that assimilation will come much more slowly for Latinos than for earlier immigrant groups, a conclusion that seems to rest on one-part wishful thinking by scholars protective of Latino identity and three-parts unwillingness by political liberals to admit the openness of American society and economy to outsiders. My guess, however, is quite the opposite: the pace of change will accelerate; Latinos will assimilate far more rapidly than European immigrants, especially to a popular culture that is quite ready to incorporate Latino elements in its voracious wooing of new consumers." Steinfels suggests that we are living off the Catholic capital and may one day discover that the capital is exhausted. When that happens, he writes, "It will simply be too late."

■ To the distress of some readers, I am not a proponent of the death penalty, but I do wish its opponents showed a bit more respect for the intelligence of those who are. Theodore Cardinal McCarrick heads the domestic policy committee of the bishops conference, and had this to say upon the announcement that one hundred people have now been cleared and released from death row: "It is yet another sign that our nation should turn away from the death penalty." To which one might respond that the extraordinarily careful and expensive process of appeals and challenges, including DNA testing, effectively rebuts those who claim that the death penalty is imposed in a reckless or unfair manner. The remarkable thing is that none of the many studies conducted by opponents has come up with an instance of an innocent person executed in at least the last quarter century. McCarrick continues: "The increasing reliance on the death penalty diminishes all of us, increases disrespect for human life, and offers the tragic illusion that we can teach that killing is wrong by killing." That the penalty "diminishes all of us" is an assertion and not an argument, and can readily be countered by the assertion that the ultimate penalty is evidence of a commitment to justice that enhances all of us. To the claim that it increases disrespect for life, it is countered that precisely the opposite is the case, that it demonstrates that we respect life so much that those who take the lives of others must forfeit their own lives. But most insulting to intelligence is the claim that the penalty "offers the tragic illusion that we can teach that killing is wrong by killing." By that logic, we should abolish punishment tout court. It is not a tragic illusion but the very rationale of punishment to teach that injuring is wrong by injuring. Catholic social doctrine, including the Catechism's discussion of the death penalty, affirms that appropriate punishment is required by justice. The argument is over what is just, what is appropriate, what is prudent. It is not an argument between the bishops—or the Pope, for that matter—and people who disagree because they are just too dumb to understand.

■ Columnist Mark Lowry of the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* reviews what is billed as the Christmas show at Radio City Music Hall and complains, "A recreation of the biblical Christmas story, complete with live animals, wise men, and shepherds drags on for a good twenty minutes. . . . To lure spectators of all faiths (and non-faiths) with the promise of an entertaining holiday revue, and then to ambush them with Christian theology, is dated and borderline offensive, especially at a time when understanding of other cultures and beliefs is more important than ever." Christmas at a Christmas show. Actually celebrating Christian culture and beliefs. What won't they impose upon us next?

■ Beware of Leon Kass! That's the gist of Sherwin B. Nuland's review of Kass' *Life, Liberty, and the Defense of Dignity* (see review elsewhere in this issue). Writing in the *New York Times Book Review*, Nuland, who made a hit with his *How We Die* some years ago and is also the bioethics guru of the *New Republic*, heaps praise on Kass, who is the head of the President's Council on Bioethics. Kass' writing "illuminates the human condition" and is marked by "elegance" that reflects "the sweep of his erudition." He is "that rarest of bioethicists—one who has had rigorous training in basic science." "A reader's mind is lured by the learned assurance in which Kass touches his argument," but then the qualification: "until its implications are considered." Don't be taken in by Kass, Nuland warns. For all his learning and elegance, he is a conservative! Worse than that, he is a supporter of "absoluteness" who believes that human life at the earliest stages of development has a moral claim upon us, that cloning human beings for any reason is wrong, that physician-assisted suicide should not be legalized, and that genetic engineering "leads all the way to the world of designer babies—reached not by dictatorial

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fiat, but by the march of benevolent humanitarianism." So you can see what a dangerous fellow Leon Kass is. Nuland proposes an alternative approach to assisted suicide, cloning, and eugenics. He writes, "But most will read the necessities of our humanness differently, and recognize the need for flexibility." Ah, yes, flexibility. Of course the issues are terribly tangled, the dangers are very real, and the potential for evil great. But, faced by the "moral complexities" of experimenting with what he recognizes could be monumentally wrong, Dr. Nuland urges flexibility. Kass believes it is a necessity of our humanness not to do wrong. He warns against embarking upon experiments that will turn our humanness into the object of uncontrolled and uncontrollable experimentation. He is clearly an extremist. Nuland fears that Kass may persuade us that he is right. His review ends with a single word: "Beware." One hopes that readers will ignore Nuland's warning and take to heart the argument of *Life, Liberty, and the Defense of Dignity.* One hopes that most of us, rejecting the counsel of Nuland, believe that "flexibility" in dealing with great evil is itself evil. On that score, we should not hesitate to sign up with Leon Kass in the party of "absoluteness."

■ Long ago, when I was a student at Concordia College (now Concordia University) in Austin, Texas, I was greatly impressed by a sermon that kept returning to the theme, "God has no grandchildren. He only has children." The preacher's point was that faith cannot be inherited; that each of us become children of God by our own act of faith. I do not reject that insight when I observe that, in saying Mass today, there are few parts of the rite that so consistently touch my heart as the phrase before the Sign of Peace, "Look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church." The Church does believe with me, and for me. We do have grandparents and brothers and sisters and cousins and a host of the faithful both here and in glory who sustain us in faith. This truth was brought to mind in reading an address on "The Question of Authority" by Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor of Westminster, England. He cites the commentary by Henri de Lubac on the statement by the third century Origen, "For myself, I desire to be truly ecclesiastic." I have written a good bit on what it means to be an "ecclesiastical Christian," and some say they are puzzled by the phrase. I mean what de Lubac writes in *The Splendor of the Church*: "Anyone who is possessed by a similar desire will not find it enough to be loyal or obedient to perform exactly everything demanded by his profession of the Catholic faith. Such a man will have fallen in love with the beauty of the house of God; the Church will have stolen his heart." Which is to say that Christ has stolen his heart. Murphy-O'Connor notes that today the word "authority" is so problematic because it is habitually associated with power. But ecclesial authority is grounded in love, the love of God in Christ. He writes: "The Church has nothing to offer but Jesus Christ. The reality that the Church offers to our world is Christ, his gift of forgiveness and his gift of love. These are given in his word, in his sacraments, in his presence, through the power of the Holy Spirit. Like Peter in the Acts of Apostles, we say, 'I have neither silver nor gold but I give you what I have: in the name of Jesus Christ, the Nazarene, walk,' and Peter then took him by the hand and helped him to stand up (Acts 3:6-7). If Christ's is the authority of the Church, Peter is the model of its exercise. He is also a sign of the paradox which is our experience of human weakness and God-given strength. Peter was given the power of the keys, but it was not because he was strong or because he was faithful. He was, for some considerable time, neither. He betrayed Jesus out of his own mouth. His shame and his moral collapse at that moment was utterly disabling. Surely Peter is the least authoritative and trustworthy of founders? One might think so; but it is here that something of the mystery of God's graciousness and freedom is revealed and, as with the cross, we discover a truth which is a source of incomprehension (perhaps even scandal) to many. The answer is that we can trust Peter precisely because he has fallen, because he is weak, because he is forgiven, and because he is raised up to service. We trust him because in him we see God's power working in our human weakness. Peter knew from his own experience the depth of the gift he offered; he knew that it was neither his gift nor his authority but that of the One he denied and yet loved. Like each one of us, he experienced not only his own need of forgiveness; he experienced first hand from where that forgiveness comes. He was both empowered and commissioned to go out and to offer that same forgiveness to the whole of mankind. He was indeed the rock on which the Church was founded. She, like Peter, speaks not out of any kind of false strength, but out of her experience of weakness. And she speaks God's truth that she lives and experiences every day. This is the authentic voice of the Church, a voice enriched with the gifts our Lord has given her and emboldened and quickened with the authority with which he has invested her: 'Go therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and know that I am with you always, even to the end of time.'"

■ Carnegie Hall and the Atlanta Motor Speedway were big jobs, but the real hope for expansion is in installing upholstered theater-style seats in churches,

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says Les Lundberg of Irwin Seating in Grand Rapids, Michigan, a major manufacturer. Business is booming with Protestant megachurches. "They're almost looking for a non-church look," says Lundberg. The business hopes to break into the Catholic market. "We're never going to sell there until we develop a kneeler option," Lundberg observes. "What you fight is really tradition." When it comes to giving churches a non-church look and fighting tradition more generally, Irwin Seating is joined in the battle by numerous Catholic wreckovators of recent decades. Their record of success is depressingly impressive.

■ Splendid. J. F. Powers' novel, *Morte d'Urban*, has been reissued by *New York Review Books*. It is the unforgettable (at least for me) story of Father Urban—his ambitions, follies, and final fidelity. I was going to say more about the book, but then I came across this fine appreciation by Terry Philpot in the *Tablet*: "This is a picture not only of souls seeking salvation against humdrum temptation but trying to live out their call in small-town, rural 1950s America. It is about men living in community with their misadventures, squabbling, jostling for position underpinned by life's comedy; they seek preferment, they drink beer, they play golf. Their petty rivalries stand against larger ones that beset the orders of the Clementines and the Benedictines and (most especially) the Jesuits. Their spiritual lives are hardly ever shown, their youthful vocations and their relationship with God never stated, save by implication. They are resolutely, fallibly human. They muddle through. And as they do so Powers not only illuminates a way of life and type of person but also creates comic creations, who, against the odds, occasionally exhibit an everyday saintliness." That doesn't say it all, but it says a good part of it. J. F. Powers died in 1999 and is not much read now. 'Tis a pity. He was such a scrupulously slow writer that there is not as much of J. F Powers to read as one would wish. But start with *Morte d'Urban*.

■ My aversion to cruelty prevents me from providing the details on the demolition of a new book by John Milbank and Catherine Pickstock, *Truth in Aquinas*, by Oxford philosopher Anthony Kenny. Suffice it that he says the book "is full of sophistical legerdemain," and makes a convincing case in support of that judgment. In the same essay, however, Kenny is sympathetically critical of Ralph McInerny's Gifford Lectures, *Characters in Search of Their Author*. McInerny, as you undoubtedly know, is a Thomist of the strict observance who says he is a Christian because it is simply the most reasonable thing to be. Kenny writes: "Professor McInerny urges that theism has a better claim than atheism to be the default position of the human mind. He writes explicitly as a Christian philosopher, and admits to an antecedent expectation that the natural theology project can be successfully completed. This is no lapse in philosophical integrity, he claims. Every philosopher, atheist as well as theist, brings to his task antecedent convictions, and neither side can claim monopoly of willingness to follow the argument where it leads. There is, however, an important difference here between the believer and unbeliever. An unbeliever can contemplate without guilt the possibility of changing his mind and accepting belief; the believer, on the other hand, holds that it would be sinful for him to change his mind and lose his faith. This does not, in itself, make faith irrational; after all, a secular liberal must surely believe that it would be wicked for him so to change his own mind as to become a Nazi. It does, however, undermine McInerny's claim that the believing philosopher is as open-minded as the unbeliever." That is an argument frequently heard, but it has never seemed to me very persuasive. If a person's deepest commitment is to seek the truth by following reason wherever it may lead, and if a Christian thinker is led to the conclusion that Christianity is not true, then he would not hold that it is sinful for him to abandon Christianity. That is what he would have held when he was a Christian, but he is no longer a Christian. Similarly, the secular liberal who changed his mind so as to become a Nazi would not think it wicked to be a Nazi, or else he would not become a Nazi. Both the Christian and the secularist might have vestigial guilt feelings about having abandoned their former beliefs, but, to the extent they are rational, they would view such feelings as irrational. Anthony Kenny is wrong and Ralph McInerny is right. Somewhere Reinhold Niebuhr wrote that he was a Christian because, of all the ways of understanding reality that he knew about, Christianity made more sense of more facts. That's not the whole of the matter, not even by a long shot. But it is a crucial part of the matter that McInerny vindicates in a lucid and accessible manner in *Characters in Search of Their Author*.

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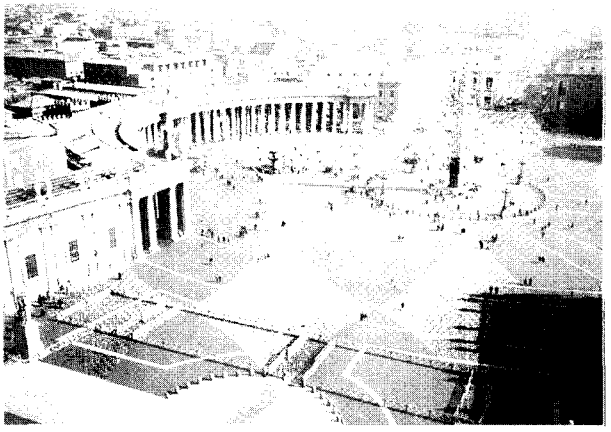

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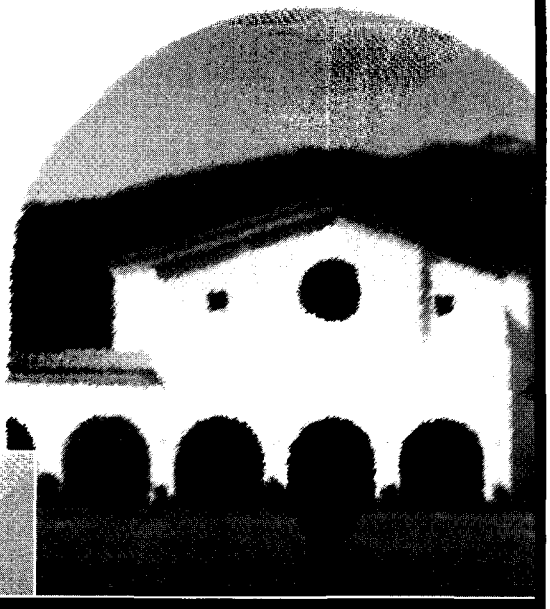

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